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The Spirit of Indian  
Nationalism



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# THE SPIRIT OF INDIAN NATIONALISM.

BY  
BIPIN CHANDRA PAL.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY  
W. T. STEAD.

PUBLISHED BY THE HIND NATIONALIST AGENCY,  
140, SINCLAIR ROAD, WEST KENSINGTON,  
LONDON.

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Ô.M.  
PREFACE.

This small book had already been sent to the Press some time before Mr. Chirol started his recent articles on the Indian Unrest in the columns of "THE TIMES." It is not, therefore, a reply to him, but the reader will see that some of the most vital points raised by Mr. Chirol had already been anticipated in the following pages.

Mr. Chirol admits that the present upheaval in India is essentially social and religious. It is really due to a keen conflict of two different types of civilisations. If this be true, then it will have to be admitted that a conflict of ethical and spiritual ideals can never be overcome by any sort of political remedies. What the situation really demands are neither concessions nor repressions, but a larger synthesis which will harmonise, under a broad and universal philosophy of life, the conflicting ideals and cultures that have come face to face in modern India. The real work in India is thus not of the mere politician or publicist, be he Indian or British, but of the philosopher and statesman. There is, no

doubt, a political side to this problem, demanding some sort of political remedy. But the political symptom being what may be called a mere local trouble, arising out of a constitutional malady, may be treated with local palliatives to remove local irritation. The place and purpose of these palliatives must be simply to keep up the strength of the patient to prevent the sudden break-down of his constitution, and thus get time to work out the slower and more radical cure. Above all, these local applications must be of such a nature as will neither increase the painful symptoms nor by driving a local eruption below the surface, help it to attack the more vital organs. This is really the conclusion which is sought to be established in the following pages.

The object of this book is to help both the people and the Government in India to work out a peaceful settlement of the issues that face them, for in such a settlement lies the highest good of both.

BIPIN CHANDRA PAL.

140, SINCLAIR ROAD,  
WEST KENSINGTON,  
LONDON, W.

*October 15th, 1910.*

## INTRODUCTION.

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When I promised to write a word of introduction to this booklet, Mr. Chirol had not begun the long series of articles on "Indian Unrest" which have been appearing in the *Times* from July 16 to Sept. 17. A far better introduction than anything I could write appeared in Mr. Chirol's second article (July 18). After speaking of the political aspirations of Indian Nationalism as expressed in the formula Colonial Self-Government for India, Mr. Chirol says that we are fortunately in possession of some data of "indisputable authority" which enables us to know exactly what these aspirations mean. He then proceeds as follows :—

They are furnished in the speeches of an "advanced" leader, who certainly does not rank amongst the revolutionary extremists and who has never, I believe, advocated methods of violence, though, as a journalist, the seditious tendency of his writings brought him in 1907 within the scope of the Indian Criminal Code.\* Mr. Bipin Chandra Pal, a high-caste Hindu and a man of great intellectual force and high character, has not only received a Western education, but has travelled a great deal

in Europe and in America, and is almost as much at home in London as in Calcutta. A little more than two years ago he delivered in Madras a series of lectures on the New Spirit, which have been republished in many editions and may be regarded as the most authoritative programme of "advanced" political thought in India. What adds greatly to the significance of those speeches is that Mr. Pal borrowed their keynote from the Presidential address delivered in the preceding year by the veteran leader of the "moderates," Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, at the annual Session of the Indian National Congress. The rights of India, Mr. Naoroji had said, "can be comprised in one word -self-government or *Swaraj*, like that of the United Kingdom or the Colonies." It was reserved for Mr. Pal to define precisely how such *Swaraj* could be peacefully obtained, and what it must ultimately lead to.

Mr. Chirol then went on to make copious extracts from Mr. Pal's speeches, which need not concern us now. For in this brochure Mr. Pal speaks for himself and can be gauged not by extracts but by the sum and substance of the statement which he wishes to place before the British public. I only quote Mr. Chirol to show that in the opinion of the ablest British publicists whom the *Times* could find to study the problem of "Indian Unrest," Mr. Bipin Chandra Pal is a man with a right to be heard on the subject on which he writes.

I have known Mr. Pal for some years, and like him



much. He seems to me emphatically a straight man, thoroughly sincere and keenly intelligent and excellently well informed. I have heard him on the platform and I have many a time enjoyed the privilege of receiving him as an honoured guest in my own house. I know none of my Indian fellow subjects whom I would trust more unreservedly to say the thing that he is thinking without yielding to the temptation to flatter or to the fear of giving offence. He is a Hindoo who believes in his religion. He is an Indian who believes in his country. He has assimilated our Western culture and he uses it to interpret to us the Eastern mind. He could not do us a better service. The fact that he may differ from us as to the precise point and the exact time when India should undertake the grave responsibility of governing herself, in no way detracts from the value and the importance of his testimony as to the present trend of things in his native land.

There is only one question to be asked in approaching such a treatise as this. It is simple and to the point. Is the author an honest man, and does he know what he is writing about? Having no hesitation in answering both these questions in the affirmative, I heartily commend this little book to the British public,

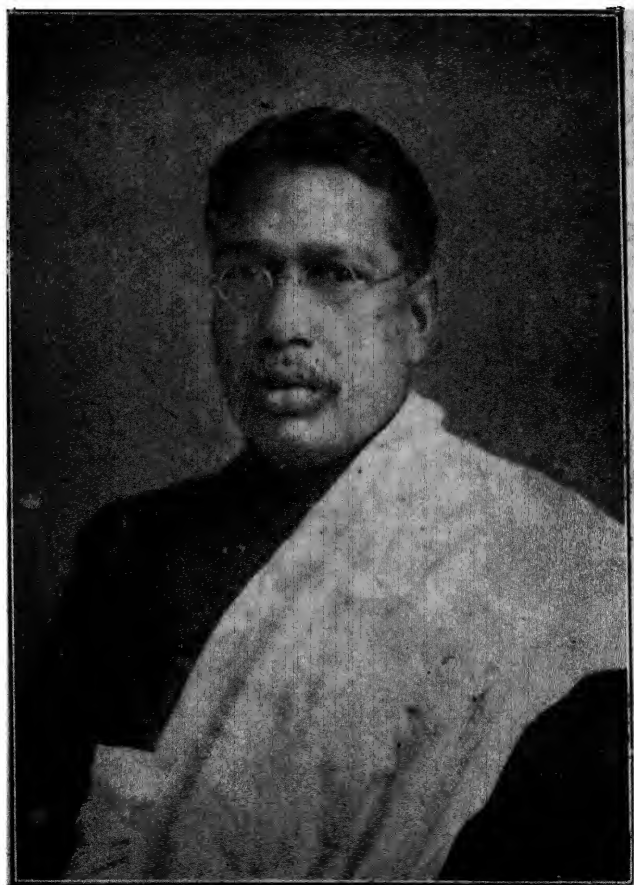
When I had finished Mr. Pal's eloquent statement, the deepest impression which it left upon my mind was a certain feeling of awe. For if Mr. Pal is right we are all up against a religious awakening in India, a real spiritual revival that recalls reminiscences of the Puritan movement of the seventeenth century. If he be right, then the efforts of the Indian Government to repress it by proscribing the Bhagavadgita, and prosecuting the Aryasomaj, will fare as ill as Archbishop Laud's efforts to restore Anglicanism by cropping the ears of the author of "Histromatrix."

For of all things the most unmanageable by the mere politician is a sincere, passionate, religious faith.

WILLIAM T. STEAD.

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\*Mr. Chirol is mistaken in thinking that Mr. Pal's imprisonment in 1907 was for sedition. It was for contempt of court, which he committed by refusing to give evidence on behalf of the Crown in a sedition case. As a matter of fact, Mr. Pal has never been accused of sedition in India.



**BIPIN CHANDRA PAL.**



OM.

## The Spirit of Indian Nationalism.

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NATIONALISM is a new cry in India. The Nationalists are a new school in Indian politics. This school came first into prominence in 1905, after the partition of Bengal into two administrative divisions, against the wishes of the people, and the declaration of a boycott of British goods, by their leaders, as a practical protest against that wanton outrage. This school proclaimed absolute autonomy as its ultimate ideal, and self-help and self-reliance as its methods. All these appealed at once to a large section of the people. Its political philosophy compelled intellectual conviction. Its sensitive patriotism quickened the spirit of

self-sacrifice. Its bold stand against official lawlessness created a new courage in the people. And Nationalism became at once the name of a common ideal, a common purpose, one general spirit and impulse that moved the classes and the masses alike in more than one Indian province. Its fundamental philosophy was grasped only by a few, but the spirit was caught by many, and it seemed only a question of time when even these many would be thoroughly posted up in the intellectual and spiritual teachings of the new thought.

That time, however, the Nationalist teachers were not allowed. They proclaimed national autonomy as their ultimate goal, but at the same time propounded a scheme of absolutely peaceful and lawful self-reliant activities for the realisation of that end. Boycott, both economic and political—boycott of foreign, and especially of British, goods, and of all honorary associations with the Administration: National Education, implying a withdrawal of the youths of the nation from the officialised universities and Government-controlled schools and colleges, and training them up in institutions conducted on *national lines*, subject to *national control*, and calculated to help the realisation of the *national destiny*

National Civil Volunteering, aiming at imparting a healthy civic training to the people by the voluntary assumption of as much of the civic duties at present discharged by official or semi-official agencies as could be done without any violation of the existing laws of the country,—duties, for instance, in regard to rural sanitation, economic or medical relief, popular education, preventive police duties, regulation of fairs and pilgrim-gatherings—settlement of civil and non-cognisable criminal disputes by means of arbitration committees:—these were the proclaimed methods of the Nationalist school. The evident object was to create, in the first place, a strong civic sentiment in the people with the help of co-operative organisations for the furtherance of the common good, and thus to train them gradually for the larger and heavier responsibilities of free citizenship: and, in the next place, to cover the whole country with a network of active political organisations which would place the leaders in direct and living touch with the people, and enable them to bring, from time to time, the irresistible pressure of organised public opinion to bear upon the Government, helping thereby the gradual expansion of popular rights in a peaceful way.

until the final settlement of the vital political issues between the people and the foreign State-authority holding at present absolute political sway over them. The end pursued by these means was essentially moral. The object was to create in the community an interest larger and higher than the narrow and more or less selfish interest of personal preference or family advancement. It was really to develop a new manhood in the country, realising itself through the self-controlled activities of the national life, and gradually, through that life, making its special contributions in culture and character to the larger life of universal humanity. No movement in any country had perhaps been inspired with a loftier ideal than this, or had tried to follow more peaceful methods for working out the political emancipation of a subject people. The foreign bureaucracy in India, however, saw that the success of this Nationalist propaganda, however peaceful and lawful it might be, would mean the attainment of national independence in India without striking a single blow or shedding one drop of blood for it.

And this is what they have always been seriously apprehensive of in India. They know that the secret of their power is not



physical but moral. Their authority rests entirely upon the willing acquiescence of the people in their rule and not upon the 75,000 British soldiers in the country. A hundred times that number would not be sufficient, as an army of occupation, in a continent about half as large as Europe, and with a population counting fully one-fifth of the known human race. The British did not conquer India by the sword, and they do not rule there now on the authority of the sword. They acquired the country by sheer good luck, they rule it through hypnotism. But however peaceful the new methods might be, they struck directly against this hypnotic spell. From the bureaucratic standpoint, even an armed insurrection would be more welcome than this moral revolt. An insurrection, in the present disorganised and disarmed condition of the country, might be easily put down, and its relentless repression might possibly lead to fresh demoralisation and the re-establishment of the old hypnotic spell. But a peaceful propaganda, keeping itself scrupulously within the limits of the law, and yet slowly quickening and organising the latent moral and spiritual forces of the people, would be absolutely irresistible. The bureaucracy re-

alised this, and was naturally interested in destroying the peaceful character of the new movement and pursued a policy of executive lawlessness to drive it beyond the limits of law. The Nationalist leaders saw through the game, and refused to be driven to the least semblance of lawlessness by all this official repression. But the following were not yet duly disciplined, the party was not organised. And some impatient spirits commenced to make unauthorised attempts to reply to official terrorism by a more or less organised system of counter-terrorisation. This by-play, however, has in no way diverted the real national movement either from its old ideals or its old methods.

Svarâj is still the ultimate ideal of Indian Nationalism. It is the far-off object of the Nationalist Movement. It does imply absolute autonomy. But no one can definitely fore-cast what will be the practical settlement of this claim, and in what position Great Britain may finally stand in relation to a self-governing India. But the bureaucracy have not the faith to leave these ultimate issues in the hands of God. They have not the patience to calmly await the verdict of future history, delivered through actual events. They are

eager to force the hands of Fate, and wrest a permanent lease of their irresponsible political authority over the people, from the hidden bureau of Providence. And this fatal blunder is entirely responsible for the appearance of a party of political assassination in an essentially lawful and peaceful movement of self-reliant activities and passive resistance.

The official mind has failed from the very beginning to realise the meaning of the new Nationalist Movement, even as it had failed to appreciate the character of the earlier political activities of the educated classes in India. The methods of the earlier agitation, which were subsequently summed up by the Indian National Congress (1885), were methods of prayer and protest. They were really methods of what has been called political mendicancy, though mis-called, constitutional. But the Indian bureaucracy was intolerant even of the very mild criticism to which their acts and policies were subjected by sincerely loyal Congress-men. Had they treated the Indian National Congress with due consideration and sympathy, had they paid heed to its friendly warnings, and conceded graciously to its very modest demands, had the Indian

State Secretary in London done, ten years ago, what Lord Morley has tried to do now,—enlarged the Legislative Councils upon an elective basis and admitted qualified Indians to responsible offices in the administration of their own country, the old illusions might have been indefinitely kept up. But the Congress agitation was treated first with suspicion and then with open contempt. And the practical failure of it either to influence the Government or organise the people, called into being a new criticism, which vigorously applied itself to the demolition of the old delusions. This criticism denied the right of the Indian agitation to call itself constitutional. There could be no constitutional agitation, it declared, in a country where the Government was not constitutional but essentially despotic, and the people had no constitutional agency, by means of which they could enforce their will on their rulers. The education of public opinion, the organisation of public demonstrations, and adoption of memorials and petitions, in such a country, can have only one effect, namely, the creation of popular discontent; and impotent discontent must inevitably lead to widespread disaffection, and quicken the spirit of freedom in the community. This

is what the Indian National Congress actually did. The fear of such discontent may contribute to the wisdom of official policy, and thereby lead to peaceful progress: but in that case the fear must be great and real. The Congress did at first inspire the authorities with this wholesome fear. It is to this that the reform of the Indian Legislative Councils by Lord Cross's Indian Councils Act, was entirely due. But the Congress gradually came to be regarded as a harmless organisation, and thus lost its power and influence over the Government. Its methods, however, were only peaceful but not constitutional. For though constitutional methods are peaceful, peaceful methods are not necessarily constitutional. And the success of either of these methods is determined, not by the strength of their logic or the abstract justice of their claims, but only and always by the force that stands behind them, force not applied but capable of application, if need be, for the due realisation of their respective ends. In constitutional agitation, this force is a constitutional force; in mere peaceful agitation, it is a moral force. The Congress agitation in India had really neither the one nor the other of these forces

behind it. The Government had no constitution; the people at large had neither a political consciousness nor a political will; neither the inspiration of an intelligent ideal nor the determination of a clear and definite purpose. The new movement created both. It presented an intelligible ideal, that of svarâj or national autonomy; and prescribed a definite and practical method which every man, and even every woman, might at once adopt in his or her own sphere of life, for the furtherance of this ideal, the method, namely, of self-help and passive resistance. From its ideal the new propaganda derived its faith in its ultimate success; in its methods it had the assurance of peaceful advance towards that ultimate end.

The Indian bureaucracy, however, failed to realise the strength of the new inspiration, or recognise the necessary implications of the new methods. They mistook the new-born desire in the country for an independent political existence, which was really the latest phase of a long and consistent course of social evolution,—for a rootless and mischievous imitation of alien ideas and ideals. They ignored the greatest work that England had done in India, namely, the quickening of

national self-consciousness in the people. They under-estimated the forces that English education, British laws and methods of administration, increased facilities of intercommunication,—had created in the country, and traced the new nationalist activities to an extraneous impulse from the sudden rise of Japan and the successes of that small island empire against Russia. They deliberately shut their eyes to the fact that, unlike the Indian National Congress, the new Nationalist Movement was not a class-movement, that the masses and the classes no longer stood wide apart from one another, but that the leaders, having started a vernacular propaganda, the masses were being fast drawn in their thousands, and tens of thousands, to the Nationalist platforms. They would not see that even the women had caught the soul-stirring infection of the new patriotism.

And, least of all have they been able to understand the supreme inwardness of this new patriotism. It is not a mere political sentiment, secular both in its origin and implications. In India, nothing really is purely secular. The sacred and the secular are strangely blended together in every department of the comparatively primitive life and

activities of the people. The most illiterate and ignorant trader never opens his small place of business without painting the figure of his god or goddess on its portals, nor starts his petty and scribbling daily journal without inscribing the name of his tutelary deity on the top of its pages, the first thing every morning. The Congress propaganda practically failed to draw the masses, first because it was conducted mainly in a foreign tongue; next, because its ideas and ideals had no reference to the thoughts and traditions of the people, were not expressed in the terms of national history and literature; and, lastly and chiefly, because it had no religious reference or inspiration in it. The failure of the Congress was entirely due to its pronounced secular character. But the new National Movement came into being with the cry of "Bandê-Mâtaram." This salutation imparted to it a religious inspiration which the National Congress never had. It drove the new ideals deep down into the very heart and soul of the land, and introduced a new sacrament of nationality and patriotism among the people.

"Bandê-Mâtaram" is not really "Hail, Motherland," but "Hail, Mother." This "Mother," as applied to the Divine, is an old



word and an old idea in Hinduism, which recognises not merely the fatherhood but also the motherhood of God. The term "Father" applied to the Divine, signifies his protective providence; the word "Mother" specially symbolises his creative energy. It is the common designation of all the goddesses worshipped by the Hindus. Kâli, Durgâ, Lakshmi, Sarasvati—all these have always been addressed as "Mother." This "Mother" in "Bandê-Mâtaram" combined them all in a new synthesis, and applied the old, the sacred, the dearly-beloved term, to a new concept, that of the Motherland. Through this salutation has come into being a new cult in the land, the cult of patriotism. This new patriotism is thus filiated to the Pitris, or the line of immortal ancestors; to the Devas, or the ancient and traditional deities presiding over nature; to the Rishis, or the saints and sages of the race, to whom society owes its special culture and character. And, last of all, this new patriotism has also become filiated to Universal Humanity, which is symbolised by Mahâ-Vishnu or Nârâyana in orthodox Hindu thought. Bunkim Chunder Chatterjee is the discoverer of this new salutation,— "Bandê-Mâtaram"; and his symbolic pre-

sentation of the "Mother" is significant. Here the essential and permanent form of the "Mother" rests eternally on the lap of Mahâ-Vishnu. This is her real form,—the nation eternally resting in Humanity. And by all these means the new patriotism in India has become really a new religion to vast numbers of its people. For good or for evil, it is a new force in the country, deeper, stronger, and more far-reaching than any that the British Government has had as yet to face in India. The bureaucracy have hated these new developments, even as they hated the activities of the Indian National Congress at one time. And hatred has no illuminating powers; it only darkens, but can never clear, the intellect. The Indian bureaucracy have, therefore, failed from the very beginning to take a calm and statesmanly measure of the forces that lie at the back of this nationalist upheaval in the country.

The modern half-educated European is peculiarly lacking in imagination and insight. He cannot understand anything that does not fall into the narrow grooves of his thoughts and predilections. Inflated with the conceit of superior colour and culture, he cannot form any correct estimate of what he contemptu-

ously brushes aside as barbarism and superstition. Lacking to a very large extent the spirit of religion himself, he cannot adequately assess the worth of the religious impulse, especially when expressed through unfamiliar symbols and ideas, as a motive power in human affairs. Not that he is not apprehensive of what he calls fanatical outbursts, specially among people considered low in the scale of civilisation ; but his apprehensions are very much like those of the skilful and intrepid sportsman shooting big game in the wilds of India or Africa. And, like the sportsman, he depends upon his superior skill and cunning to overcome any possible dangers which may threaten him. To this lack of imagination and insight is added, in the case of the Indian Bureaucracy, a general ignorance of the inner thoughts and sentiments of the people they are set to rule. They do not even know the language of the country, and without an intimate acquaintance with the literature of the people, they are necessarily unable to understand the real inwardness and strength of the nationalist upheaval.

Any new movement that proceeds from the soul of a people finds expression in their literature, and imparts a new impulse to their

art. It is significant that the political agitations of the past generations in India have left practically no mark upon any of the vernacular literatures of the country. All the Congress literature is in English, showing how little hold that movement really had on the national mind. It is, however, different with the present movement. The new patriotism has, within the last six or seven years, created a special and inspiring literature of its own. Indeed, what may be called the hymnology of this new patriotism offers a most striking proof of the depth and reality of the new movement, specially in Bengal. But the so-called responsible rulers of the country have little knowledge and less appreciation of the character and significance of the large body of national songs that have been circulated in recent years far and wide over every part of the two eastern provinces. And the most significant thing in these hymns is what may be called the strong messianic hope and aspiration which they breathe.

This messianic idea is the last refuge of down-trodden and despairing peoples, with a supremely religious turn of mind. It was so with the Hebrews, when crushed by Roman domination. It has been so with the Hindus,

almost at every period of political ferment in the past. The two great political upheavals in the eighteenth century which represented the protest of the Hindu consciousness against Moslem domination, namely the rise of the Sikhs in the west and that of the Mahrattas in the south, were both the expression of a new religious upheaval. The idea of divine support and counsel was latent in both the movements. That was really the secret of their success. The interpretation of secular movements in the light of spiritual intuitions was both the cause and the proof of the strength of those movements. It showed the hold they had on the mind of the people. A mere political movement would hardly appeal to them. Endowed with exceptional spiritual discernment, the Hindu has, it seems, always recognised the signs of coming changes in the political condition of his country. Gifted with a strong and overwhelming sense of the perpetual presence and providence of God in the affairs of men, he has always recognised the faithless futility of fighting against fate, and has ungrudgingly accepted the inevitable as the good. Always keenly conscious of the impermanence of all things mundane, he never sought to grasp,

with the mortal tenacity of more materialistic peoples, that which, he saw in his spiritual intuition, was ordained to pass away. He believes in the inexorable law of karma, which is only another name for the law of causation as applied in the moral world. Nations, like individuals, are equally subject to this law. They, too, have to work out their respective karmas, both good and bad. Through their good karma, the Hindu came to prominence and power, colonised new regions of the earth, conquered new peoples, spread culture and civilisation in the world. But no one has a permanent lease either of life or fortune. Even Brahmâ, the first progenitor and ruler of the universe, so runs the sacred tradition, having created the worlds, could not eternally keep or rule them. Night came, the night of universal dissolution, and the worlds passed away; and with them passed away even Brahmâ himself into that Eternal Silence, whence he and all his wondrous worlds had come to being. This is mythology, no doubt. The modern man, especially the modern man in Europe, would be inclined to dismiss it as "stuff and nonsense." Even the modern man in India would not perhaps take the old traditional cosmogony seriously. But though

the story may be treated as mythical, the idea underlying it has no feebler hold on the popular consciousness to-day than what it had in the old unsophisticated days. The story is repeated even now from a hundred thousand platforms by Brahmin preachers and reciters of legendary lore, all over Hindu India. And it quickens the natural intuitions of the people concerning the absolute impermanence of earthly life and fortune. This is the real meaning of the so-called fatalism of the race. This is the explanation of their placid acquiescence to the successive changes of political government in the country.

This is how, when the Mahomedans came and commenced to break down Hindu thrones and desecrate Hindu temples with impunity, people saw that it was the will of God that this should be so. Such sacrileges would be impossible without divine sanction. It was, therefore, that Mahomedan rule was accepted by the people as a divine ordering, not sullenly, but with calm resignation, and even with good grace. They helped it, they co-operated with it, they bore no ill will towards it, until in its own time it, too, commenced to fall into decay and disrepute, and signs of a new turn of the Wheel of Providence became

evident. When the Hindus had exhausted their good karma they went down and the Mahomedans came up. When the Mahomedans also had exhausted their own karma, and had served their special purpose in the divine scheme, they too went down. The Hindus had gathered a little karma under Moslem subjection, and they came up once again for a little while to rule the destinies of the country. The sovereignty of the Mahrattas in the south, and of the Sikh Commonwealth in the west, was the fruit of this karma. But this karma was feeble; the fruit thereof was, consequently, very short-lived. And thus, in the ordering of Providence, another, and a new race, came in and took the reins of government away from the paralysed hands of the Moghuls, pushing aside both the Sikhs and the Mahrattas. The masses now accepted them also as a new dispensation of Providence. The time had not yet come for India to come to her own. The sins of past generations, the evil karma of the nation, had not yet completely worked themselves out. A new subjection and a new penance were necessary to wash and work these out. This is how the national consciousness almost intuitively interpreted the new turn of events. This is the



meaning, really, of the quiet and willing acquiescence of the people in this rule. But while doing so, they knew all the while, in their inner consciousness, that it was, like all else in this world, only a passing phase of their history and evolution. And as before in the past, so equally also in the future, there will be another turn of the Wheel of Providence; and when the signs of a fresh change become evident this quiet and willing acquiescence of the people in the existing political order will also begin to wane. And then a demand will be made upon the deepest spiritual forces of India and the highest statesmanship of England to save the situation.

To those who are permitted to study the present upheaval from the inside, signs of this new consciousness are evident in every direction. Even the ignorant and illiterate people have commenced to ask, though, of course, in fear and trembling, lest their voice should be heard by the rulers of the land,—“How long will it last?”—meaning by “it” the British Raj. Any one who goes about the country and mixes among the people as one of their own, hears the question repeated from a thousand

lips. But the authorities have hardly any appreciation of the gravity of the situation. They are engaged in putting down the outer expressions of an unrest, the root-cause of which lies deep in the spiritual intuitions of the people. Lacking true spiritual perceptions themselves, they are interpreting a deep spiritual upheaval as a mere economic unrest or political ferment. They have no appreciation of the character of the forces that are slowly ranging themselves against them.

These forces are essentially religious and spiritual. They are manifest in every department of the present nationalist activities. A fervent religious spirit breathes through every poem and hymn in which the new nationalist sentiments have found expression during the last five or six years. It has been the inspiration of every nationalist orator who has drawn people in their thousands and tens of thousands, to the nationalist platforms. It has created new symbols,—a new form of idolatry, as some perhaps would call it,—representing the apotheosis of the geographical habitat of the race. And it is this intensely religious note which constitutes the reality and the gravity of the present situation.

It would be a grievous mistake to think tha

this religious garb has been given to the new activities by mischievous and intriguing political agitators, eager to rouse the masses and draw them to their propaganda. It is quite possible that some politicians, brought up in alien ways of thinking and drawing their political inspirations from European literature and history, may have been seeking to use the religious instincts of the people in this degrading and diplomatic fashion. But if there be any such, they are survivals of the old political schools, and in no way represent the new national spirit. The real leaders of the people to-day are men who either never lost, or have come back to, the faith of their fathers. Their faith is larger and deeper, because the result of a new synthesis, than even the uncritical faith of the people. Though products of modern European culture, they have found out the utter inadequacy of the prevailing deism or rationalism of Europe to explain the mysteries of the spiritual life. They have discovered new meaning and inspiration in the ancient symbols and sacraments of their people. To them, Hinduism is not dead, but still living; the religion of the Hindu is not idolatry, not even idolatry; the old gods are no mere myths. Cosmic

evolution has brought forth successive planes of beings from the protozoa to the human kingdom. But is man the last point in this evolutionary process? they ask. He is admittedly the highest—on the sensuous plane; but is there no higher? Cannot there be higher planes above the human, beyond the cognizance of the senses? And it is these higher orders of creation, the possibility of which at least cannot reasonably be denied, that are represented by the gods of the traditional faith. These gods do not make Hinduism polytheistic any more than the angelology of the Catholic Church justifies the charge of polytheism against Christianity. These gods, owing to their superior powers, can control, to a large extent, the destinies of men, even as men can control, to some extent, the life and movements of the lower animals. These gods are not imagined,—no mere cosmic or poetic symbols,—but are entities known by the seers in trance or samâdhi. They are not within the ken of ordinary mortals; but no more do ordinary mortals see the protoplasmic cells upon which the biologist builds his theory of organic evolution. These cells, though invisible to the naked eye, are yet seen with the help of powerful microscopes. The gods also

are seen under certain conditions, by man's super-sensuous faculties, which are developed through long and laborious psychophysical and psychical disciplines. The super-sensuous is not the supernatural. Every human being is endowed with supersensuous faculties, awaiting due development through proper exercise and right discipline. So every man can see the gods by fulfilling the necessary conditions.

This, briefly, is the general line of exegesis by means of which the old gods are being rehabilitated, so to say, in the thoughts of the modern Hindu. The methods of this new exegesis, if it can at all be called new,—may not appeal as strictly rational to all people. They are not likely to be acceptable to those who are still under the spell of nineteenth century rationalism, whether in India or elsewhere. But this kind of rationality is no test of the reality of human beliefs. And statesmanship is not concerned with the rationality, but simply with the reality, of popular faiths. For it is this reality, the earnestness and sincerity with which particular faiths are held,—which lends vitality and strength to historic movements. Both Christianity and Islam have changed the face of a large part of the

globe, lending strange vitality and peculiar colour to the social and political life of a large section of the human race. But the tremendous influence of these faiths upon contemporary history cannot be measured by the degree of truth or reason which they embodied, but only by the strength of faith which they were able to create. And what we see in India to-day is the birth of a new exegesis, which is rehabilitating the old beliefs and trying to adjust them to the demands of the modern life and thought. This revived faith of the educated classes of the country in national institutions and scriptures has been rapidly bridging over the gulf which the onrush of foreign ideas and ideals had at one time created between them and the general masses of their countrymen. And it is this religious spirit, at once so real and so conservative, which differentiates the new National Movement from the old, purely secular, political movements in British India.

This religious note is revealed by the messianic aspiration with which the new movement has been associated from its very birth. The messianic idea in Hinduism has found,

perhaps, its fullest expression in the well-known verses of the Bhagabad-Geetâ—

Yadâ yadâ hi dharmasya glanirbhavati  
 Bhârata,  
 Abhyutthânamadharma-sya, tadâtmânan  
 sreejâmyaham.  
 Paritrânâyâ sâdhunâm vinâshâyaca dush-  
 kreetâm,  
 Dharmasamsthâpanârthâyâ sambhavâmi  
 yugê, yugê.

Whenever, O Bhârata, there is decadence of Dharma and prevalence of Adharma, I always incarnate myself.

For the protection of the good, for the extirpation of evil-doers, and for the establishment of Dharma, I am born from age to age.

Bunkim Chunder Chatterjee, the author of the Bandê-Mâtaram hymn, stands prominently among those who have helped to call the present national spirit into being; and in modern Bengalee literature we owe the revival of the old Hindu messianic idea to him. It was he who first brought it before his educated countrymen as a mighty moulding force in

social evolution among intensely religious peoples. To him we owe a new interpretation of the life and character of Sree-Krishna as a great nation-builder in ancient India, and as a divine exemplar to the Hindu people for all time to come. Bunkim Chunder's influence was, however, confined to the educated classes only. Indeed, the masses have always believed in Sree-Krishna, and required, therefore, no new exegesis or interpretation to revive their lost or waning faith. What they wanted was a practical application of that faith, not as a mere religious or spiritual force, but as a social, and, perhaps, even as a political, inspiration. Krishna stood too far away from the present. As God, he is no doubt present in spirit always and everywhere. What they craved for was his manifestation in the flesh. He had incarnated himself repeatedly, from age to age, "for the protection of the good, for the extermination of evil-doers, for the re-establishment of decadent Dharma." A fresh cry now went up from the heart of his chosen people for a fresh advent of the Saviour. This cry is a peculiar feature of the present ferment in India, and more particularly in Bengal, which is, in some



sense, the native home of the new Nationalist Movement.

The fundamental point of difference between the older political agitations and the new Nationalist Movement is thus,—(1) its intensely spiritual and religious character as compared to the absolutely secular spirit of the former; and (2) its strong grip on the actualities of Indian life and thought as against the imitative character of the older and earlier social and political activities. Nationalism is intensely realistic; the older political and social thought was more or less imitative and imaginative. The older generations drew their inspirations of freedom and progress from European, and especially British, history and literature. The old patriotism did not feed upon the actualities of Indian thought and life, but upon the idealities of Europe and America. Freedom, except in the movements of religious and social revolt where it meant personal freedom only, was a vague idea. The conception of freedom has its natural growth in the sense of bondage, and its vitality is determined by the strength of this sense. There was a keen and growing sense of social and sacerdotal restrictions in the English-educated classes, who were inspired with the

ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity, imbibed from the gospel of the French Revolution, through its English presentations; and consequently there was a real desire for social emancipation,—a desire for freedom from the restrictions of caste and custom. But there was hardly any deep and real sense of political bondage in the country then. There was scarcely any sense of political wrongs. On the contrary, there was a general impression that the British have established peace where there was turmoil, and a settled government where there was anarchy. Nor was there yet any perception of the ruinous economic conflict between Great Britain and India. Consequently, the desire for political freedom was very weak; and it did not go beyond getting higher appointments in the Administration, and some share in the shaping of the laws of the land. The old patriotism, therefore, simply represented an awakening of the educated classes to a consciousness of their inferior position in the modern world, and a revival of the memories of the past glories of their race. It was just the beginning of a reaction, but not yet the birth of a new life.

A brief survey of the old and the new hymnology of Indian patriotism at once reveals the

wide and vital difference between the old political agitations and the new national upheaval. One of the most popular hymns of the old patriotism was this : —

When, tell me, O Bhârata (India), wilt thou get across the ocean of thy present misery? Or, wilt thou only sink and sink lower in thy degradations, until thou enterest the nether regions for good? Having gladly made over thy riches and jewels to the stranger, thou bearest to-day only an iron-chain on thy breast!

The lights of the stranger shine in all thy cities; but thou art in darkness all the same!

Another patriotic song declared that—" day by day India was being weakened and impoverished through her subjection to the foreigner; a flight of locusts from a high Island, having fallen upon the land, were eating up all the grains, leaving the husks alone for the children of the soil!" Others wept over the glories of the past. These were the dominant notes of Indian patriotism thirty years ago; they are scarcely heard to-day. The new note is intensely realistic and profoundly religious and spiritual. It breathes no longer the old sense of humiliation and despair, but a new

pride of race and a deathless hope in the destiny of the people.

When Lord Curzon divided the old Administration in Bengal into two parts, cutting off the eastern from the western districts, contemptuously rejecting the earnest solicitations of a united people, the nation's reply was,—

Wilt thou cut asunder the bonds forged by Providence? Art thou so powerful? Our breaking and building are in thy hands: hast thou this conceit?

Thou wouldst drag us perpetually behind thee, thou wouldst perpetually keep us under thee; but thou hast not the strength, the attempt will not bear the strain.

However close thou may'st draw the cords of repression around us, do not forget that even the weak have their strength. However mighty thou may'st be, there is a God.

By killing our strength, even thou shalt not live. When the cargo is over-full, the boat will sink.

This reference to Providence was distinctly new note in modern political struggles in

India. It showed that the mind of the nation had commenced to turn to higher powers for strength and inspiration. It was no longer a prayer for justice or generosity from man, but a cry for strength and illumination from God. No political conjurer can call up such a cry from a nation's heart.

The immense popularity of these hymns is a proof of the depth of the new patriotic sentiment in the country. In India there are no music-halls and but few theatres, which again are completely under the censorship of the police; and the Executive Government, in their campaign against sedition, has of late been exercising this right of censorship to prevent the propagation of almost any kind of nationalist ideas through the national stage. The national songs, however, find extensive circulation in spite of the police and the magistracy. Most of the new hymns, half religious and half political, have, thus, found their way to the most distant corners of the land. The naked cow-boy, reclining under the familiar banyan-tree, sings out the glories of his country, and calls upon Krishna to come and re-

establish the decadent Dharma. Little girls, playing with one another, sing in chorus—

Cry Bandê-Mâtaram,—Forty million brothers,  
Forty million sisters, are we inferior to  
any?  
Cry Bandê-Mâtaram!

And holy mendicants chant from door to door,—

Lowly Bhârata cries out to thee, Come, O  
Murâri.

Murâri is a name of Krishna, which preserves the memory of his fight with the demon Mura, whom he killed to give relief to his people.

It is in this way that the new National Movement has been working itself into the very heart and soul of the people. Old sacraments that had lost their vitality with their original meaning and significance, have been quickened with a new life under the impulse of this new patriotism. The authors of the French Revolution made grotesque attempts to re-

place the old sacraments of Catholicism by new ones, representing the new civic order which they were trying to set up in the land. In India, among the Hindus, civic religion is growing through an easy and natural process, out of the old symbolism and ritualism of the people. Hinduism has, indeed, like all ethnic systems, this advantage over credal religions, that its symbols and rituals, its sacraments and mysteries, are all partly religious and partly civic, partly social and partly spiritual. In fact, in Hinduism, the social and the spiritual are strangely blended together. Consequently, the new national spirit has found apt vehicles for expressing itself in the current religious rights and formulas of the people. The common Hindu formula for the sacrificial purification of water—

Gangêca, Jamunêcaiva, Godâvari, Saras-  
vati,  
Narmmadâ, Sindhu, Kâveri, jalêsmin  
sannidhim kuru.

May the Ganges, the Jumna, the Saras-  
vati, the Nerbudda, the Indus, and the  
Kaveri, enter into this water!—has be-

come the baptismal formula of the new national life, a sacrament and symbol of Hindu unity. Every orthodox Hindu, during his daily ablutions, repeats this verse. So long it was a mere *mantra* to the vast majority of the people, a statement of the sanctity of these mighty rivers, along the course of which at one time Hindu life and culture had grown. To the devout few, it has had a sacrificial and supernatural value. But to vast multitudes to-day it is vested with a new meaning. The swarthy bather, standing knee-deep in a dirty pool, and bathing himself with its muddy waters, repeats this mantra, and is conscious that it is the same water in which millions and millions of his brothers and sisters are bathing in different parts of India, and the consciousness helps him to remember his kinship with them and realise the unity of his nation.

The so-called idolatry of Hinduism is also passing through a mighty transfiguration. The process started really with Bunkim Chunder, who interpreted the most popular of the Hindu goddesses as symbolic of the different stages of national evolution. Jagaddhâtri—riding a lion which has the prostrate body of an elephant under its paw,—represented the Motherland in the early jungle-clearing stage.



This is, says Bunkim Chunder, the Mother as she was. Kâli, the grim goddess, dark and naked, bearing a garland of human heads around her neck,—heads from which blood is dripping,—and dancing on the prostrate form of Shiva or the Good—this, says Bunkim Chunder, is the Mother as she is; dark, because ignorant of her self; the heads with dripping blood are those of her own children, destroyed by famine and pestilence; the jackals licking these drippings are the symbol of desolation and decadence of social life, and the prostrate form of Shiva means that she is trampling her own good under her feet. Durgâ, the ten-handed goddess, armed with sword and spears in some hands, holding wheat-sheafs in some, offering courage and peace with others, riding a lion, fighting with demons,—with Sarasvati, or the goddess of Knowledge and Arts, supported by Ganapati, the god of Wisdom, on her one side, and Lakshmi, the goddess of Wealth, protected by Kârtikeya, the leader of the Heavenly army, on the other side,—this, says Bunkim Chunder, is the Mother as she will be. This interpretation of the old images of gods and goddesses has imparted a new meaning to the current ceremonialism of the country, and

multitudes, while worshipping either Jagad-dhâtri, or Kâli, or Durgâ, accost them with devotion and enthusiasm, with the inspiring cry of Bandê-Mâtaram. All these are the most popular objects of worship of the Indian Hindus, especially in Bengal. And the transfiguration of these symbols is at once the cause and the evidence of the depth and strength of the present movement. This wonderful transfiguration of the old gods and goddesses is carrying the message of new nationalism to the women and the masses of the country.

Behind this mighty transfiguration of the old religious ideas and symbols of the country stands, however, a new philosophy of life. Strictly speaking, it is not a new philosophy either, but rather a somewhat new application of the dominant philosophical speculations of the race. Behind the new nationalism in India stands the old Vedantism of the Hindus. This ancient Indian philosophy, divided into many schools, has one general idea running through it from end to end. It is the idea of the essential unity of man and God. According to this philosophy, Substance is one though expressed through many forms. The Reality is one though appearances are multitudinous. Matter, in the eye of this philoso-

phy, is not material, but essentially spiritual; the thought of God concretised. Man is the spirit of God incarnated. The meaning of cosmic evolution is to be found, not in itself, but in the thought of the Absolute. It is, to adopt the Hegelian dictum, the movement of the Self away from itself, to return to itself, to be itself. The Absolute, or Brahman, is the beginning, the middle, and the end of this evolutionary process. He is the Regulative Idea in cosmic evolution. He is progressively revealing himself through the world process. In man, the Divine idea, or the Logos, comes slowly to consciousness of itself. The end of human evolution is the fullest realisation of man's unity with God. So long, especially in what may be called the middle ages in India, this essential unity between God and man was sought to be realised through metaphysical abstractions, by a negation of the social and the civic life. There was an undue emphasis on the Subjective and the Universal to the neglect of the realities, however relative they might be, of the Objective and the Particular. Protests had, however, been made from time to time against these monkish abstractions, but in spite of these protests the dominant note continued to be that of Abstract Monism.

Neo-Vedantism, which forms the very soul and essence of what may be called Neo-Hinduism, has been seeking to realise the old spiritual ideals of the race, not through monkish negations or mediæval abstractions, but by the idealisation and the spiritualisation of the concrete contents and actual relations of life. It demands, consequently, a social, an economic, and a political reconstruction, such as will be helpful to the highest spiritual life of every individual member of the community. The spiritual note of the present Nationalist Movement in India is entirely derived from this revived Vedantic thought.

Under the influence of this Neo-Vedantism, associated to a large extent with the name of the late Swami Vivekananda, there has been at work a slow and silent process of the liberalisation of old social ideas. The old bigotry that anathematised the least deviation from the rules of caste, or the authority of custom, is openly giving way to a spirit of new tolerance. The imperious necessities of national struggle and national life are slowly breaking down, except in purely ceremonial affairs, the old restrictions of caste. In the new movement, old and orthodox Brahmins are rendering open obeisance to the heterodox and non-

Brahmin teachers. There is an evident anxiety to discover scriptural and traditional authority for even the outrages that some of these have committed against the old social and sacerdotal order. And where no such authority could be found, their personal freedom of thought and action is being condoned on the principle that those who are to be the saviours of their nation stand, like the mendicant and the holy man, above all law. And all this is a proof of the strange hold that the new nationalist propaganda has got on the real mind and soul of the people.

But this movement has not only developed a strong spiritual note, relating itself thereby to the profound religious consciousness of the people, laying the symbols and sacraments of national religion under contribution for the furtherance of its specific end, namely, the up-building of a complete and consolidated national life in the country; but it has struck a strong note of reality in Indian politics also, which it never had before. It has subjected the British policy in India to a rigorous analysis, and has thus revealed its true character with almost cruel candour. It has completely demolished the idea that England is, and has always been, in India mainly for the good of

the Indian. Above all, the Nationalist Movement has approached the central political problem in India from a new standpoint, namely, that of psychology.

In fact, it has boldly declared that the real political problem in India is not a strictly political, but essentially a psychological problem. The miracle of British rule in India,—the government of 300,000,000 of peoples, spread over a whole continent, by a couple of hundred thousand foreigners, civil and military, all told,—was due neither to the physical nor to the intellectual, nor to the moral superiority of the rulers over the ruled, but to pure hypnotism. The people were hypnotised to believe in the altruism of the foreign rulers. Untrained in the crooked ways of civilised diplomacy, they had believed what their rulers had said, either of themselves or of their subjects, as gospel truth. They had been told that the people of India were unfitted to manage their own affairs, and they believed it to be true. They had been told that the people were weak and the foreign Government was strong, and they believed it to be true. They had been told that India stood on a lower plane of humanity, and England's mission was to civilise the semi-barbarous native, and

people believed that they were really low in the scale of civilisation. This is how the hypnotism worked. The nationalist school exposed the hollowness of all these pretensions. It commenced to make, what are called, counter-passes in hypnotism, and at once awoke the people to a sense of their own strength, an appreciation of their own culture, and has created a new conviction that they, too, like the other races of the world, have a distinct mission and destiny.

The Nationalist Movement had been preceded by a general religious and social revival in India. This revival came as a reaction against the earlier movements of religious and social revolt, raised admittedly under the influence of European thoughts and ideals. This revolt was the direct result of the application of the canons of the dominant rationalistic thought of Europe of the later eighteenth and the early nineteenth century to the social and religious life of India. It represented what may be called the outer movement of the modern Indian consciousness. It was soon followed by the necessary return movement. The movement of social and religious revival which preceded the present Nationalist Movement, represented really the return of the

national consciousness to itself. It was not really a conflict between the progressive and conservative elements of Indian society, as superficial observers have tried to make it out, but a conflict between aggressive European and progressive Indian culture. It was India's mental and moral protest against the intellectual and ethical domination of Europe. In some sense, it was really the reflex action of the growing appreciation of Eastern, and specially Hindu, thoughts and ideals in Europe and America. Just as foreign Christian missions have very materially helped to develop the self-consciousness of the Christian nations, as civilisers of the world and benefactors of humanity, even so the Hindu and Buddhistic missionary activities in Europe and America have revealed India's place in the evolution of modern world-culture. All these worked together to create a new pride of race; and in this pride of race was really born the new National Spirit in the country. By all these various means the old hypnotism was slowly breaking away. What was needed was only the bold declaration of the new political ideal to complete this work. The Nationalist School came into being, as a new political party in India, with such a declaration. Na-



tional Autonomy, absolutely free of British control, they declared, was their political ideal. It was a bold declaration, no doubt; nothing like it had been heard before in British Indian politics. It almost staggered both the Government and the people. But the mere desire for freedom could not be punished as criminal. The Nationalist leaders also took care, while making this declaration, to publicly announce that, though absolute freedom was their ultimate ideal, considering the state of the country, wisdom counselled the pursuit of this legitimate ideal of absolute freedom, through absolutely peaceful and lawful means. The Government was powerless to punish peaceful people simply because they avowed their desire to be free. But while it staggered the authorities, it set the minds of the people free from the moral and intellectual bondage of the old political agitations of the country. As in religion and social life, India had commenced to claim her right to determine her own course of evolution herself, in the light of her own past, untrammelled by overbearing foreign thoughts and ideals; so, in politics also, she claimed her legitimate right of self-control and self-determination, to work out her own problems in her own way, freed from

the bondage of European economic or political philosophy. Not self-government, whether colonial or otherwise, which expressed the idea of political freedom in the terms of European thought and experience, but SVARĀJ was proclaimed as the new ideal.

And the significance of this declaration lay mainly in the fact that svarāj was not a mere political term. Indeed, it was borrowed by politics from the highest philosophical and religious literature of the people. The concept was, therefore, a good deal more than what is conveyed by self-government. It is larger than that of the English word freedom. Freedom is an essentially negative, svarāj is a positive, concept. The term is used in the Vedānta to indicate the highest spiritual state, wherein the individual, having realised his identity with the Universal, is not merely freed from all bondage, but is established in perfect harmony with all else in the world. Svarāj means cessation of all conflicts. Politically, it means not merely the absence of bondage, but also the settlement of all disputes due to conflict of interests, either national or international. The concept involves not merely national freedom, but universal federation also, without which nations can never be

established in perfect harmony with one another.

This term—SVARÂJ—fully represents the spirit of Indian Nationalism. The identification of the individual with the universal, the recognition of the freedom of the individual, not in himself as standing apart from the whole of which the individual is a part, but in and through that whole only,—this is the very soul and essence of the concept svarâj. This freedom is possible of realisation by those only who recognise unity in diversity, who see that there is really One Life, One Mind, One Will, One Spirit, fulfilling itself through diverse instruments and in diverse ways; and, above all, who recognise in this Unity of the Self, as it is called in the Vedânta—the cancellation of all conflicts and the absolute settlement of all disputes. Viewing life and all its relations and activities from this supremely spiritual standpoint, the Indian Nationalist recognises a spiritual reference as much in religion proper as in his social economy and political laws and institutions. Politics is, with him, part of his larger religion; it is a department of the science or philosophy of salvation. And, it is therefore, that the word which signifies the highest

spiritual end represents also the highest political ideal.

This is the real spirit of Indian Nationalism. It is an essentially religious spirit. Its end is the realisation of God-life in and through the activities of the social and the political life. That end is absolutely assured, but whether it will be reached by peaceful means or not will be determined by the capacity or incapacity of British statesmanship to work out the problem that faces it in India.

The Nationalist leaders fully realise their responsibility. They know that they stand before the bar of history and humanity. They are fully aware that if, by short-sighted impatience and recklessness on the one hand, or by equally short-sighted lack of courage and candour on the other, they were to needlessly prolong or embitter the struggle for political freedom in India, and, thereby, increase its cost, they would justly receive the curses of their own posterity; and they are anxious to avoid both. They are eager for a peaceful solution of the problem that faces the people and the Government in India at the present moment. The conditions of peaceful progress towards political freedom are present in India to an extent in which these have never been

present, perhaps, in any other country struggling for national freedom. But the future of the movement hardly depends now on them. They are being denied access to the mind and heart of their people. They are being shut up in prison even without the frequently futile formalities of public trials. Their press is practically gagged, through not only a new Press Act but by an outrageous interpretation of the old Sedition Laws also. Their platforms have been practically proclaimed. The restraining influences under which an open and lawful propaganda have of necessity to work, are denied to them. And the unrest grows in secret. The exasperation of the people increases under bureaucratic repression. Faith in peaceful methods, which means faith in moral force more than in physical strength, is being slowly killed; and immature, impatient, irresponsible men, without any real appreciation of the culture of their country, or any intimate knowledge of the real character of their people, working in secret or from the safety of foreign lands, are trying to drive the movement beyond the limits of law and order. Like the earlier methods of political agitation, miscalled constitutional, these new methods of revolution-

any propaganda are also imitative and European, without any reference to the life and culture of the people, and having no inspiring message for them. But though this propaganda may not ennoble the multitudes, it may yet easily brutalise them, and thereby let loose the animal passions of the disorderly elements of society simultaneously upon the rulers and the ruled. This is the danger that threatens India in the immediate present. This is the present situation. It is not our own creation. It is not of our own seeking. We have always been anxious for peaceful, lawful, orderly evolution. But we desire freedom. We desire to be in our own country as other peoples are in their country. We claim the right of controlling the course of our historic evolution ourselves. We desire our own good and our own place in the universal scheme of things, and bear no ill-will towards any other people or country. We are against all violent methods, because we know that these will defeat the high ends that we have in view, namely, the revelation of God in man, through due regulation of the social and civic relations and activities. But we are helpless. The movement is fast being driven out of our control. A withdrawal of present repression

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may yet save the situation. Nothing else will. What is wanted are not favours and concessions, not a few more appointments under the Government for the leaders of the people, or a few more seats for them in the Legislative Councils, but only freedom of lawful activities and peaceful self-development; not the gift of a ready-made constitution from a British minister or the British Parliament, but fair opportunities to the people themselves to gradually create and organise their own civic life and institutions in their own way, following their own traditions, and in harmony with their eternal race-spirit and national character; and out of that life to gradually evolve a real national form of popular government. What is wanted is freedom of thought and speech for the education of the people in their own national ideal and culture; freedom of association for the promotion of public good, and the organisation of public life—freedom within the limits of the law. The Nationalist leaders have always freely recognised the legitimate authority of the present Government,—however despotic it may be,—to discharge the primary functions of the state in India as *de facto* rulers of the land. This authority is based

upon the general acquiescence of the people in their rule, and as long as this acquiescence lasts it is not only a political, but an essentially moral, authority. While recognising this authority of the present Government, the Nationalist leaders demand for the people freedom of opportunities for the exercise of their own primary rights, rights which no Governments create by ukase or statutes, but which are the real creators of Governments themselves. So long as a Government respects these primary rights of its subjects, the people, too, are bound to respect the primary rights of their Government. But recent repressions in India have openly attacked these primary rights of the people, and it is these repressions that are entirely responsible for the appearance of revolutionary violence in a movement of lawful, self-reliant activities and peaceful, passive resistance. The forces of revolutionary violence may, however, still be controlled by the leaders of the people. They may pass beyond control in a little while.

And those who desire well of India, and well of Great Britain, too, should calmly consider what the increase of this revolutionary violence would mean to the peace and progress of both the countries. The greatest risk

to India would be a further loss of her old spirit, a decadence of her revived moral and spiritual life, a diversion, for a time at least, from her God-appointed mission as the spiritual teacher of modern humanity. But she will, sooner or later, regain her self. To England, however, the loss, though on a lower plane, will be far more serious and permanent. The struggle, if not set at rest sometimes, will be a long and distracting one. It will not be likely to upset the British Government in India; revolutionary violence never is able to do so. Revolutionary movements of this kind are always destructive. They do not have, as a rule, any constructive programme, capable of practical realisation. But though they may not upset, they may very easily paralyse the Administration, by undermining the moral hold of the Government upon the governed. Governments whose authority is based essentially upon their hypnotic influence over the people, are peculiarly liable to be paralysed by revolutionary violence. And it is this which constitutes the seriousness of even sporadic political violence in India. Apart from this grave political danger, there are very serious economic risks also involved in the increase or continuance of this

political unrest in India. India is the largest market for British goods. It is the largest field for economic exploitation by British capital. Though the present unfair economic relation between India and Great Britain cannot possibly last for very long, and even the removal of the causes that have directly contributed to the present revolutionary violence will not end the economic struggle between the two countries at once, yet it will undoubtedly help a fair and friendly settlement of it, and possibly discover some plan or principle by which the commercial relation between the two countries may be placed upon a fair footing equally profitable to both. Leaving, however, these ultimate issues in the hands of God, what British statesmanship has to consider now is the fate of the enormous British capital laid out in Indian enterprise. For, the continuance of this revolutionary unrest will inevitably depreciate every form of Indian stock, to the financial embarrassment of many British families who derive their subsistence from the industrial and commercial exploitation of India. From whatever point of view it may be approached, an early and radical settlement of this revolutionary unrest in India will seem to be extremely urgent,—needed

equally in the interest of India as of England. And there is only one way in which this may be successfully done. That, however, is not to increase but immediately to withdraw the present repressive measures altogether, and restore the state of things as they existed before 1906. Repression has been tried for the last four years, but what is the result? Official repressions called revolutionary violence into being in India. Before the Government started its campaign against the Indian Press, in 1907, there were neither political murders, nor political dacoities, neither bombs nor lawlessness of any kind worth notice in the country. It is the press prosecutions and the vindictive sentences passed on political offenders by British magistrates, that brought the bomb-thrower and the political assassin into the field. Successive repressive measures have been passed since, but the unrest, instead of declining, has gone on increasing and spreading from month to month. The threat of greater repression held out by Lord Minto shows what a feeble grasp even the Indian Viceroy has on the terrible actualities of the Indian situation. The policy enunciated by His Excellency is exactly what the advocates of revolutionary violence most

ardently desire just now. They want the people to be repressed beyond endurance, so that they may be exasperated beyond reason, and rise up in the fury of animal passions against their oppressors. If British statesmen realised the depth of the present upheaval in India, if they knew how it has affected not merely the English-educated classes but even the ignorant and inert masses as well, how even the women have caught the infection of this new national spirit, how it has become even as a new religion to vast numbers of people, how it is transforming the old fatalism of the race into a mighty political force, developing a new stoicism in the people, such as makes them absolutely indifferent to physical pain, privation, or even to death itself,—if British statesmen could calmly think of the infectious character of all patriotic sacrifice and revolutionary heroism,—they would understand the utter folly of trying repressive measures for putting down the surging aspirations for freedom of teeming multitudes. Repression has failed everywhere: it will not, cannot, succeed in India.

There is only one way in which this unrest may be radically cured, and that is not to increase, but at once to remove, the present re-

pressions,—to repeal the new Crimes Act, and recreate people's confidence in the ordinary judiciary of the country by introducing the jury system in all cases liable to long-term imprisonment; to set free the men who are held in detention without trial and accusation; to restore to the people the old freedom of thought and speech, and the old freedom of association, and thus allow them to develop and organise their own intellectual, ethical, spiritual and social, and even their civic life, in their own way, without external pressure or obstruction, so long as they do not overstep the limits of the ordinary laws of the land. This is the only remedy. It is a bold remedy, no doubt, requiring great courage of statesmanship to prescribe it for a Dependency; but serious maladies everywhere require a little reckless treatment. To be able to seriously think of such a remedy, Great Britain will have, however, to honestly make up her mind to some day relinquish her present unnatural and irresponsible political position in India; she must learn to contemplate with absolute equanimity the certainty of an independent political status for her great Dependency. It is very hard to do it, I admit. But it is just in the doing of these very difficult



things that the moral capacities of nations, as well as of individuals, are tested. It is just here, in seeing the inevitable long before it comes, and making future provisions for the best possible compromise with the inevitable, that true statesmanship lies. If Britain can command this statesmanship, the situation may yet be saved in India. If she cannot, then—may God and his angels help India, and help England too!



## THE PARTITION OF BENGAL.

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On the 16th of October, 1905, the old Province of Bengal was divided into two administrative units by Lord Curzon. The old unit comprised three provinces, Bengal proper, Behar, and Orissa. It was under one Lieutenant-Governor, who was assisted in legislative work by a Legislative Council, and in revenue work by a Board of Revenue, composed of the senior members of the Civil Service. The plea for a redistribution of the administrative area was that the burden of responsibility had become too heavy for one Lieutenant-Governor. Many schemes of redistribution had been put forward and discussed from time to time. One of these was to take away two or three districts from the eastern part of Bengal proper and add them on to the Province of Assam. This Assam had, before 1874, formed part of Bengal, but the needs of the tea-industry led to its institution into a separate administration under a Chief Commissioner, and two districts of Bengal proper, Sylhet and Cachar, had then been cut off from the Bengalee-speaking tract and added on to the new Province. It was now

proposed to cut off another slice from that area and put it under the Assam Government. But this smaller redistribution was not carried out. It was strongly opposed by the people. For other reasons, the authorities also did not see their way to doing it. Instead of expanding the jurisdiction of the Chief Commissioner of Assam, Lord Curzon formed a new Province altogether, cutting the eastern districts of Bengal proper off from it and adding them on to Assam, and constituting them all into a Lieutenant-Governorship. This is what is known as the Partition of Bengal.

But why should a mere redistribution of administrative area be so strongly resented by the people? The reason of it is that the people of Bengal saw in it an attempt to weaken the solidarity of the Bengalee-speaking people, and, by depriving Calcutta of the support of Eastern Bengal, to curb and cripple the increasing political strength and influence of Bengal. In the next place, this redistribution meant a doubling of all the higher posts in the Provincial Service, which, while it offered increased opportunities of promotion and preferment to the members of the Indian Civil Service, added needlessly to the burdens of the people. The third, and the most strong objection, was that it struck at the sense of unity of the Bengalee race. The Eastern and Western districts had always

formed an integral social, and literary and commercial, as well as an integral political and administrative unit. This redistribution destroyed to some extent, or at least sought to destroy, this sense of national unity. It was interpreted as a strategic move, and the interpretation came from the general policy of Lord Curzon, whose one aim was, it seemed to the thinking and intelligent classes in the country, to kill the growing political power of the educated classes.

The proposal for thus dividing Bengal at once called forth an agitation, the like of which had never been seen before in British India. The classes and the masses stood shoulder to shoulder to protest against what they all regarded as a wanton outrage on their cherished sentiments. Mass meetings were held in every part of the province, and people came to these in their thousands and tens of thousands. Memorials were sent to the Government. The Hindus and the Mahomedans both joined together to support these. The protest, especially from Eastern Bengal, was absolutely unanimous.

This was in 1904. Lord Curzon saw the force of the agitation, and at once applied himself to seduce the landed classes away from it. He went on a visit to Dacca, accepted the hospitality of the leading Mahomedan landlord of the place, and by his winning manners and

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friendly remonstrance, won him over completely to his side; and Nabob Selimulla, who had, previously, been one of the leaders of the anti-partition agitation, now became an open and staunch supporter of that measure. His lordship next went to Mymensingh, and tried to win over the leading Hindu landlord of that district, but failed to do so.

Lord Curzon's visit to Dacca and the conversion of Nabob Selimulla to the side of the Partition Scheme was almost synchronous with the beginning of the recent Hindu-Mahomedan disturbances in Eastern Bengal.

When the final decision of the Government of India on the Partition of Bengal was published, people saw that their suspicions of the scheme were fully justified. In this document, Lord Curzon gave a new reason for it; and this was to institute a special Mahomedan Province in British India. In the eastern districts of Bengal there is a very great preponderance of Mahomedan populations. But still there never had been any Hindu-Mahomedan disturbance there within living memory. The two communities had always lived together in peace and amity. Even the religious and social cleavage between them was much less pronounced than in some other parts of India. There was, absolutely, no consciousness of any conflict of political interests between them. Yet Lord Curzon con-

jured up such a conflict, suggested that owing to the domination of Calcutta in the political and administrative life of Bengal, the Mahomedan population of East Bengal was placed at an undue disadvantage; and one, if not the chief, object of the redistribution was to remove these disadvantages to the Mahomedan community there.

It is significant that no one ever heard of this new plea before Lord Curzon's visit to Nabob Selimulla, and his conversion to the pro-partition creed!

Though the articulate populations of Bengal were entirely opposed to any redistribution of administrative area, they were willing to meet the Government half-way, and come to a reasonable compromise. The first compromise suggested was that if the burden was found too heavy by the Lieutenant-Governor, raise the Administration from a Lieutenant-Governorship to a Governorship, as in Bombay and Madras, where the executive authority vests in a Governor-and-Council. This would lighten the present burden, without disturbing the territorial arrangements or wounding the susceptibilities of the people. This was a fair compromise, but Lord Curzon would have none of it.

Another compromise was to form Behar and Orissa, and some other non-Bengalee-speaking tracts into one province, and keep the Bengalee-speaking tracts under one Ad-

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ministration. This, too, was a very reasonable suggestion. But Lord Curzon would listen to this neither. And his refusal to come to any sort of a compromise strengthened the suspicion in the public mind that the real motive of this Partition was not administrative but political. And the idea lent extraordinary strength to the agitation against this measure.



## THE BOYCOTT MOVEMENT.

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On the 7th of August, 1905, almost immediately after the decision of Lord Curzon's Government in regard to the Partition of Bengal was published, the leaders of the Bengalee people, in public meeting assembled, in the Calcutta Town Hall, under the presidency of Maharaja Manindra Chandra Nandy of Cossimbazar, the premier landlord of the Province, declared a general boycott of British goods, as a practical protest against the Partition. The original idea of the leaders was to force their grievance upon the attention of the British public by this retaliatory measure.

Lord Curzon had ridiculed the methods of the Indian National Congress, characterising the activities of the old political propaganda as mere "gas"—soda-water bottle—as he called it. He had asked people, instead of passing "Resolutions," to form some, and manfully carry them out. In declaring this boycott they now simply followed his lordship's advice. And the boycott caught on almost like wild-fire.

The leaders proposed to have this boycott as a temporary measure, and in the pledges



drawn up by them a time-limit was put on its continuance. The boycott was to last until "Partition was withdrawn."

Their following, however, saw much further than they did. They at once recognised in this boycott not merely a political weapon, to be used for frightening the British manufacturers and working men, by touching their pockets, or, as a Bengalee politician said, by "pressing their pocket-nerve, the most sensitive part of the organism of their rulers,"—but a potent economic instrument as well. They saw here about the only way to protect themselves from the ruinous economic exploitation of the country by British capital. And, consequently, the pledges sent out from Calcutta came back, duly signed by large numbers of people, but the conditional sentence,—“until Partition is withdrawn”—scored through.

The strength of the boycott was at once felt by the traders in foreign goods. A very large number of forward contracts used to be made hitherto on what is called the *Lakhy-day*, or *Lucky-day*, which falls generally in October. But the *Lucky-day* of 1905 came and went without any business in Manchester piece-goods. Other branches of the foreign trade also suffered similarly.

Simultaneously with this decline in the sale of foreign goods, many indigenous industries, that had lost almost all hope of ever re-

covering lost ground, commenced to revive. The hand-loomers all over Bengal and Madras showed unwonted vigour. The Indian Cotton Mills, that had hitherto done but little business in the country, owing to the unfair competition of Manchester, had a new life instilled into them. New industries also commenced to grow on all sides. There was, indeed, a rage all over the country, and especially in Bengal, for the manufacture of every possible article of popular consumption in the country.

Figures of actual indigenous production are impossible to get in India. Nobody knows or can tell what the actual output of Indian handicrafts is. Any opinion concerning the growth or decline of particular handicrafts can only be based upon general inference from the economic condition of the different classes or castes engaged in them. But the growth or decline of machine-made goods can be easily ascertained. And the figures for the Indian Cotton Mills for the last quarter of a century are a very clear index of the success of the Boycott Movement.

In 1882-83, there were only 62 mills in India, working only 1,654,100 spindles, 15,000 looms, and employing 53,600 labourers in all. The total capital outlay in these mills was 4,457,000 in pounds sterling.

In 1907-8, there were 227 mills, working 5,763,700 spindles and 67,700 looms, and em-

ploying 225,400 labourers. The capital outlay was 13,160,000 pounds sterling.

One of the special features of this increase is the proportionately larger additions to the looms than to the spindles. The looms have increased during the last five years by 23,000, as against 28,000, the total increase for the twenty years ending 1902-3.

When the boycott was started, four years ago, the estimated home-production of cotton goods was less than 25 per cent. of the foreign imports; the home production of unbleached goods is now about 33 per cent. of the foreign imports. Unbleached goods are largely used by the poorer classes, and this increase in the production of these goods is a fair proof of the hold that the Boycott Movement has already got on the masses.

A significant testimony of the success of the Movement came a few months ago from a quarter that had persistently tried all these years to belittle its economic significance. The *Englishman* newspaper of Calcutta declared:—

“ It is absolutely true that Calcutta warehouses are full of fabrics that cannot be sold. In the earlier days of the boycott it was the fashion, even amongst those who were hard hit, to assert that depression in piece-goods' trade was due to this or the other economic cause.

“Many prominent Marwari firms have been absolutely ruined, and a number of the biggest European import houses have had either to close down their piece-goods’ branch or to put up with a very small business, where they previously had a large one. As for stocks in warehouses, they tend to grow larger, as Marwaris and Indian buyers who had given forward orders now state that they cannot afford to take delivery. These facts are now so well-known that it is idle to attempt to hide them. Indeed, the time has come when all injuries inflicted on trade by boycott should be made fully known. There is no question of encouraging boycotters who need no encouragement. But there is the question of thoroughly awakening the public at home and the Government of India to the fact that in boycott the enemies of the Raj have found a most effective weapon for injuring British interests in this country.”

The concluding portion of this article is extremely significant. It bears testimony to the strength of the Nationalist plea that India may attain her freedom by absolutely peaceful means, without “an armed revolution,” as the *Englishman* puts it.

“The question however is, what is the Government going to do about it. Boycott

must not be asquiesced in, or it will more surely ruin British connection with India than an armed revolution. There are means of retorting on boycotters in kind, but no one desires that things should come to that. A less benevolent Government would long ago have put an end to the attack on Manchester trade by putting a heavy excise duty on all classes of Indian-made cloths. That is a weapon that may yet have to be used. Meanwhile it might be pointed out to boycotters that there is a limit to British patience."

## NATIONAL EDUCATION

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It would be the merest affectation to deny that the immediate cause of the movement of National Education, which, like the Boycott, started in Bengal, was political. It was practically the reply of the leaders of the people to the crusade against the youthful students started by the Government of Sir Andrew Fraser, late Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, for their participation in the new nationalist activities. As soon as the Boycott commenced to spread, the Government saw that its main strength lay in the large number of young students whom it had enlisted into its service. The more active part of the propaganda was thought to be carried on by them. Success of Boycott, especially in the earlier stages, before the sentiment had time to settle down into the conscience and consciousness of the people depends almost entirely upon picketing. And as long as no physical force is used, picketing is not in any way unlawful. The young men, most of them students, did almost all the picketing. They stood at street corners and explained the duty of abstaining from buying foreign goods to people who went about marketing. Their method was uniformly intel-

lectual and moral. A typical instance was widely published at the time in the Bengalee papers. An Anglicised Bengalee lady, the wife of a college professor, was driving to a European shop to buy some goods. Some young men standing by the road saw her, and at once stopped her carriage, and commenced to beseech her to get her things from an Indian shop. She questioned their right to interfere with her freedom. They at once said that she was the wife of their teacher, therefore, they were her children and she was their mother: have not children the right to tell their mother that they would be hurt if she did certain things? But the mother knows best what is right and what is wrong: you have told me what you feel; now let me pass and do what I please, she replied. But the boys were not to be so easily defeated. They next said: all right, you do as you please, but we shall see how you can kill your own children simply for the sake of a few foreign fineries. And so saying, one of them threw himself straight in front of her carriage, and asked the coachman to drive on. At this the lady at once gave in, and declared she would not buy foreign goods any more. This was the method of these young people. There was no intimidation, no violence, no appeal to physical fear; nothing of the things that characterise picketing among the robuster peoples of the West. But

still it was picketing, and the Government did not like it. They were frightened at the growing strength of the popular agitation. They wanted to stifle it; and their first move was to make it penal for the young student population to participate in any way in the new nationalist activities. Students who attended public meetings were threatened with various punishments, to the extent even of expulsion from school, college, or the University.

The proposal for a National University was the direct result of this official move. The authorities of the Government Education Department commenced to punish boys for their participation in what had come to be even a new sacrament in the country. On the 16th of October, 1905, immense numbers of people in the two divisions of the partitioned Province abstain from lighting their kitchen fire, go about bare-footed, perform ceremonial baths in rivers or sacred tanks, tie in one another's wrist the sacred *rakhi*, a piece of silk or cotton thread, as a symbol of fraternal and national unity. When the elders do all this, the younger people cannot be expected to do otherwise. These are not mere political functions, but religious observances. But the Educational authorities started to punish the students in their control for these observances. Boys were fined for coming to school without shoes. Their guardians resented this interference with their religious affairs. They re-



fused to pay these fines. And as the authorities would not give in, the boys, in some places, left school; and their guardians organised measures for their education free from official control.

This is, really, how the National Education Movement came into being. The ground for it had already been prepared by Lord Curzon's education policy. On the plea of reforming the educational system of the country, his lordship had killed the popular element in the different Indian Universities. They were completely officialised. The old policy, a policy originally laid down in Sir John Wood's Education Despatch of 1854, of leaving the work of popular education, as much as possible, in the hands of private enterprise,—a policy that was reiterated by the Education Commission of 1881, of which the late Sir William Hunter was President,—was reversed by Lord Curzon. His Universities Bill was strongly opposed by educated public opinion all over India. When it came up for final consideration in the Viceregal Legislative Council, about 190 amendments were placed upon the agenda paper by the non-official members of Council; but they were all rejected by the solid official majority. All this had created a need for some independent organisation to take in hand the problem of popular, and especially higher, educa-

tion. The measures now adopted by the Government, to oppose the Nationalist Movement, through terrorising the students, accentuated that need, and called forth practical measures to meet it.

But though the movement owed its origin to political causes, it was neither guided by political considerations, nor controlled by political partisans. The actual leadership of it fell on Sir Gurudas Banerjee, late judge of the Calcutta High Court, who had been Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University, and was still a member of its Syndicate, and whose good sense and moderation had never been questioned by friend or foe. Under his guidance, the Bengal Council of National Education proposed to work, independent of, but by no means in opposition to, the Government Education Department. And this independent activity was justified on the ground that the education hitherto imparted under official supervision lacked a vital reference to the thoughts, the sentiments, the traditions, the religions, and even the outer physical and biological environments of the people. The object of the new movement was to organise a thoroughly *National* system of education,—both scientific and literary, as well as technical, on *National lines*, and under *National control*.

The old education imparted by the Govern-

ment Universities was much too literary ; the new National education sought to remove this excessive literary emphasis, not by crippling literary education in any way, but by supplementing it, with a compulsory technical training, at every stage of it, after the earliest primary course was gone through.

Technical education means the application of trained intelligence to knowledge of material, for the production of commodity. There is, consequently, an organic relation between (i) the intelligence of the pupil, (ii) the knowledge of material that he may possess, and (iii) the kind of commodity that can be efficiently produced by the application of his intelligence to his knowledge of material. Following this principle, the new National Council of Education adopted a graduated course of technical training all through until a high standard of literary or scientific training was received, at which point the new education divided itself into three branches, (a) the literary branch, (b) the scientific branch, and (c) the technological branch. And in this the new education became intrinsically superior to that imparted by the Government institutions.

In the next place, in the Government institutions, English was the medium of instruction in the secondary and collegiate courses. The National Council at once reduced English to the status of a second language, the

first place being given to Bengalee and Sanskrit, and in the case of Mahomedan students, to Urdu, Persian, and Arabic. The vernacular also was made the main medium of instruction. In all this it was a distinct improvement upon the older, Government-controlled methods of public instruction in the country.

The moral advantages of it were, however, the greatest of all. The Government schools and colleges, affiliated to the officially-recognised Universities, offered peculiar inducements to the students, inasmuch as they were the only way to the Government services or the profession of law. The National schools and colleges are not recognised either by the Government or the Universities. A certificate or degree from these have absolutely no value as a passport to a Government office or the legal profession. Along with a superior kind of education, the National schools and colleges promised to preserve and promote the manly character of its alumni far more effectively than the officially recognised institutions did.



## THE NATIONAL VOLUNTEERS.

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Young men, generally belonging to the Universities, had been organised into bands of helpers by the Indian National Congress ever since that institution was started. The duties of these Congress volunteers were to attend to the wants of the Congress delegates, in their camps, go on all sorts of errand for them, and keep order at the meetings of the Congress. All these were more or less what are called menial duties; and the eagerness with which young men of the highest castes and most respectable families performed all this menial and manual work, showed the kind of very superior moral training that they received by participating in this way in the service of the Mother-land. Strict obedience to the orders of their superiors, who oftentimes were one of their own number, and submission to the general disciplines of the Congress officials, had an excellent effect upon the character of the youthful volunteers. And successive Congress Presidents bore enthusiastic testimony to the good manners and readiness to serve and submit to discipline of the Congress volunteers. Mr. Sankara Nair, at present a Judge of the Madras High Court, served his

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apprenticeship, in the public life of his country, in 1887, as a Congress volunteer.

These Congress volunteers were organised only during the session of the Indian National Congress, for two or three weeks' service at the place where the Congress met. At the close of the annual session of the Congress they were disbanded. The anti-Partition and Boycott agitation in Bengal gave birth, however, to continuous political activities. Meetings and demonstrations were held almost every day all over the country. The organisation and regulation of these meetings, attended sometimes by people in tens of thousands, were no easy work. And the need of this work called into being bands of volunteers in almost every centre of the new activities, urban and rural both. Unlike the Congress volunteers, these national volunteers were not always students. They were mostly young men of respectable families, and in the rural tracts they were composed very frequently of young people belonging to the ordinary artisan and peasant class. Almost every village had its band of volunteers. The duty of these volunteers was to organise meetings and to keep order in public processions and gatherings. Besides these occasional duties, they were also called upon, from time to time, to render assistance to the poor and the sick in times of epidemics. The members of the Barisal Bandhava Samiti, composed

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mostly of students from the local college and schools, were always conspicuous for nursing the cholera-stricken poor of the town. These volunteers also helped to dispose of the dead who had no friends or relations to do these last duties by them. In India there are no undertakers. Dead bodies are disposed of, whether by cremation, as among the Hindus, or by burial, as among Mahomedans, by the relations and friends of the deceased persons. This duty was performed by these volunteers in regard to the poor and the friendless. Another duty oftentimes undertaken by these volunteers was the regulation of fairs and pilgrim gatherings. Early in 1908, on the occasion of a great Hindu festival, hundreds of thousands of people, many of them old and poor, came to Calcutta to bathe in the Ganges. The capacity of the railway administration was taxed to its utmost to transport these masses of human beings from the most distant parts of the Province. Train-load after train-load of men, women, and children were deposited at the Calcutta termini of the Bengal railways almost every hour during two or three days preceding the festival. About 10,000 volunteers were organised in Calcutta to render assistance to the pilgrims, and the excellent way in which these volunteers discharged their duties under most trying circumstances, compelled the commendation of even the Com-



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missioner of Police in Calcutta, and the Government of Bengal. Similar duties were performed by these national volunteers in other parts of the Province during special religious festivals. The discipline of these volunteers, the quickness with which they were enlisted, the efficient way in which they discharged their functions, the spirit of self-sacrifice and devotion to duty which they evinced, young men of the most respectable families and the highest caste unhesitatingly undertaking the most menial duties at the order of their "officers," took the people by surprise and staggered the Bureaucracy, who at once rushed to the conclusion that a tremendous net-work of secret organisation must have spread all over the country to make this work of the Calcutta volunteers possible. They did not understand that in India it is not money or canvassing that build up public organisations, but once the people's heart is touched, organisations grow without effort and without preparation almost in a miraculous way.

Isolated members of these various organisations may have, now and then, been found guilty of excesses. But I do not know of a single Samati which has yet been convicted, as a body, of any organised crime. And yet these useful institutions that were offering a splendid moral training to the young have been suppressed by law!





# **The Leaders of the Nationalist Movement in Bengal.**



## SRÎJÛT ASVÎNÎ KÛMÂR DATTA.

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(Written March, 1909.)

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Of the hundreds of letters that I received on my release from prison this time last year, the earliest, and, to me, the most valuable, was one from this great leader of my people, who is now shut up, without any public accusation or trial, in the Central Gaol at Lucknow.

While the rest of my correspondents spoke of *me*, referred to what they called *my* sufferings and *my* sacrifices, Asvini Kumâr alone spoke not of me, but of my Guru and my God.

"Remember, beloved brother," wrote he, "especially at this moment when the whole country is giving you such a hearty ovation, that you are a mere instrument in the hands of Him who is the Master of your life and your destiny. Remember Him always, and neither honour nor dishonour will make any difference to you."

Asvini Kumâr is presented by the irritated British officialdom in India and the ignorant Jingo Press in England, as a mischievous political agitator. But his people know him to be a lover of man and a man of God.

The species, political agitator, is unknown in India. Politics is not as yet a profession in our country, except, perhaps, among the very few who are members of the Legislative Councils, and whose official associations sometimes help them to make an addition to their income by writing petitions and memorials, on behalf of the princes and the nobility, to the Government. But the Member of Council is a respectable man, and not a pestilential demagogue. Asvini Kumâr, had he been so minded, might have been one of these, but instead of earning any money through his public activities, he has all his life spent his own substance in serving his country.

Our civilisation is such that whoever works for the public must either bear all the expenses of his public services himself, or, if he is too poor to do so, he must depend upon what comes to him unasked and unsought as the means of his subsistence. Work that is paid for is mercenary, and has no virtue in it. Every labourer may be worth his hire; but he who stipulates for his hire, or refuses to accept whatever comes of itself, works for himself and not for God. Christian England is proud of her one George Muller, but in heathen India, whoever consecrates himself to the service of his fellow-men, which is really the service of God, has of necessity to be a George Muller. Political agitators, therefore, in the European sense of the term, have absolutely no place in the scheme of our national activities. And Asvini Kumâr is, in no sense of the term, a political agitator.

Born of rich parents, Asvini Kumâr was laid under no necessity to work for a living. Not blessed with any children, he had not to provide for the future of even a large family. Without any son, he adopted, one might say, the entire school-going population of his district as his own, and devoted all his substance to their education. He started a school in Barisal, which gradually developed into a college, and stands now as one of the most efficient and popular private educational institutions affiliated to the Calcutta University. Asvini Kumâr has never sought to convert his school and college into a source of private income, has never conducted them along trade lines. For years together he bore all the deficits himself, living a plain life, and devoting practically all his income to the equipment and up-keep of his educational institution.

A distinguished graduate of the Calcutta University, he has personally supervised and directed the work of his school and college, devoting the best part of his time to his boys. Endowed with a magnetic personality, he has been a guide, philosopher, and friend to the thousands of young men who have, during the last twenty-five years, passed through his school and college. His students are spread all over Eastern Bengal to-day, occupying important positions in the various walks of life; and it is these men who really consti-

tute the very backbone of the Nationalist Movement in that Province.

Modern education in India is oftentimes condemned as a godless education. It is essentially secular; and if secular education be a proper synonym for godless education, the Indian system may be called so. In truth, however, its godlessness is due more to godless men who are placed so often in charge of it, than to the character of the education itself. Theology may be taught by means of selected text-books; but real godliness proceeds only from soul to soul. A godly teacher may develop the most fervent piety even through a secular system of education, while a godless professor will desecrate the highest theological text-books by his irreverent life and conversation. Asvini Kumâr's personality imparted a truly religious tone to most of his pupils, such as even few denominational schools or professedly theological seminaries are able to do.

Like all spiritual-minded young men of his generation, Asvini Kumâr also was in his youth a follower of the Brahmo-Samâj, at that time under the leadership of Keshub Chunder Sen. He did not join the Brahmo communion, which would involve separation from his family and social excommunication. Brahmo-Samâj stands for rational religion on the one side, and social reform on the other; and in both, it is more allied to European thought and ideal than to Indian culture or traditions. Asvini Kumâr, in his maturer years, found it difficult to accept the essentially deistic rationalism of prevailing Brahmo theology as truly rational, and drifted gradually into the great Bhakti Movement of Pundit Bijaya Krishna Gosvâmi. Pundit Bijaya Krishna had himself been in his earlier life a leader of the Brahmo-Samâj. As an apostle of that creed, he was for many years intimately associated with Keshub Chunder Sen. But the creed of the Brahmo-Samâj was too narrow to hold the rich, the varied, and the deep spiritual experiences of this great teacher, and he gradually found himself the centre of a new and powerful religious movement in Bengal, which revived the fervent spirituality of the old Vaishnavic movements, giving a new meaning and



interpretation, in our age, to ancient Vaishnavic thought and experience. Asvini Kumâr was drawn to this great teacher, and the deeper inspirations of his life henceforth flowed from this source.

To the outside public of Bengal, Asvini Kumâr is known as a great educationist, but to those who have come in close personal contact with him he is known, revered, and loved as a student of religion and an earnest and devout seeker after God. In Bengalee literature he is known as the author of a rich and learned compendium on "Bhakti Yoga," or The Way of Love. I call it a compendium because the author has copiously drawn upon the ancient literature of Bhakti in India; but it is more than a compendium. It is not a mere anthology, but a luminous exposition, largely in the light of the personal spiritual experiences of the author himself, of the ancient ideal of Bhakti and the various methods by which it is to be cultivated and attained. It is in this book, apart from his personal life and conversation, that we see the inner soul of Asvini Kumâr.

Bhakti, or Love of God, has assumed many forms in India, but the highest of these is what has been summed up in the Bhagavad Gita, specially in the 12th chapter of that immortal book. The ideal lover of God, the devotee most approved of the Lord—is he "who harbours no ill-feeling towards any creature, man or beast; who is friendly towards all and has pity for all; who is without any conceit of self and any selfish attachment; who is indifferent equally to pain and pleasure; who is uniformly forgiving and forbearing; who is content with whatever he gets; who is the master of his senses, strong in his faith, living in a perpetual consciousness of the presence of the Divine; and, who has consecrated his mind and understanding to the Lord; by whom no creature is troubled and whom the creatures cause no trouble; who is free from exultation and depression, fear and anxiety." In another place it is laid down that the ideal devotee is he who realises the presence of the Lord in his own self as well as in every other creature, and whose activities are all consecrated to the service of the Lord.

This has been the ideal of the life of Asvini Kumâr for many years past. His personal devotions, his family relations, his social and even his political activities have been guided by this lofty ideal. The inspiration of his consecrated life and labours has always flowed from this divine ideal.

For some years past, Asvini Kumâr has been engaged in writing a supplementary volume to his Bhakti Yoga, under the name of Karma Yoga, or The Way of Works. Bhakti is essentially a concern of the emotional life, while Karma is that of the volitional life. The conception of Karma has had a wonderful evolution in Hindu thought and disciplines. Originally it meant mainly sacrificial works. The Bhakti schools very largely discarded the ancient sacrifices and interpreted Karma as the worship of the Lord through his symbols. Higher Vaishnavic thought added to these ceremonial duties, the service of man. Finally, in the latest synthesis of Râjâ Râm Mohun Roy, Karma has been interpreted as everything that furthers the highest good of the people. Asvini Kumâr has sought to combine the highest ideal of public duty, as conceived by European thought, with the profound spirituality and the lofty ideals of Bhakti of his people. To him, the whole world is a manifestation of the Lord. All energy is essentially divine. All activities are due to the Lîla or the sport of the Lord. King and subject, master and servant, the oppressor and the oppressed, he who gives and he who receives, all these various phases of public life and activity, as well as all the variety of private and personal relations, whether they be of friend and friend, or teacher and pupil, or parent and child, or husband and wife—are all manifestations of divine Lîla, or the sport of the Lord. Neither politics nor economics has, therefore, been a mere secular concern with Asvini Kumâr.

A man guided by such ideals and principles oftentimes lays himself open to popular misunderstanding and misconstruction. Asvini Kumâr has also been repeatedly misunderstood even by his closest friends and most ardent admirers. Ordinarily public men may be divided into two classes, the impulsive and the

calculating. Superficially judged, Asvini Kumâr would seem to have a large dose of both in the composition of his mind and character. Sometimes he appears to be highly impulsive, at other times almost repulsively calculating. In his private relations he is almost as gushing as a woman. You cannot approach the man without feeling at once the excessive warmth of his heart. Yet when it is a question of public duty, he is oftentimes found to falter and hesitate to take a decisive step such as appears to be absolutely imperative to more impulsive men. I have had repeated experiences of both these sides of the character of Asvini Kumâr, and have sometimes grievously misjudged his public acts.

He was so misjudged by a very large section of his own people in the winter of 1904-5, over the incidents that took place at Barisal on the occasion of Sir Bamfylde Fuller's first visit to that town as Lieutenant-Governor of the newly-formed Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam. Barisal had been the stronghold of the Boycott Movement ever since it was started. And the magnetic personality of Asvini Kumâr has been the central force of it there. Asvini Kumâr had for many years past been the idol of the people of Barisal, including the classes and the masses both. His word was law to the people; and when he declared that no one shall buy or sell foreign goods any more, most people accepted it at once as a sacred injunction. It was not the result of any terror that the Boycotters had established in the town, but was simply the natural result of the loving regard in which the people held their leader. A European resident of the place wanted a few yards of grey shirting, and sent his servant to the market to buy a piece. But no one would sell any foreign goods. The matter was reported to the Superintendent of Police, and he sent a constable to the market to buy a piece of Manchester shirting for his friend. The constable was no more successful than the butler. Every trader refused to sell any foreign cloth without a permit from Asvini Bâbu. The matter was reported to the Magistrate, who wrote a letter to Asvini Kumâr, stating the facts, and asking him for a permit for a piece of Manchester shirting for his European

friend. This had happened a few weeks before the new Lieutenant-Governor started upon his tour.

The incident, apparently so insignificant, was naturally regarded as very serious by the authorities. It at once showed on the one hand the tremendous possibilities of the Boycott Movement in Bengal; on the other hand, it was a sign of the dangerous decline of the prestige and moral authority of the British Executive in Barisal. It showed that while the Magistrate was the ruler of the District, Asvini Kumâr really controlled the sentiments and activities of the people. In constitutional and democratic countries, such idols of the people become, by an easy and natural process, the rulers of the State; and personal regard strengthens the roots of political obligations. Under a despotic administration, where there is a natural conflict, whether latent or patent, between the will of the people and the authority of the State, whoever gains any strong hold on the popular mind becomes a distinct menace to the authority and prestige of the Government, unless he identifies himself with that Government, and lends it completely and unreservedly the support of his personal influence. At one time Asvini Kumâr had done so. He was at one time associated with the District Executive in municipal and local administration. But he was no longer their associate. The Partition of Bengal had created a violent breach between the Administration and the people of the Province. Asvini Kumâr took his stand in this conflict against the Government. He was, so to say, the head of the opposition, in his own district, if not in the whole of East Bengal. His hold on his people, the unique regard in which he was held alike by the classes and the masses of his district, the ready obedience that they rendered to his requests, constituted thus a serious menace to the authority and prestige of the Bureaucracy. Asvini Kumâr's power over his people had to be crushed.

That was the idea with which, it seems, Sir Bamfylde Fuller went to receive his instructions from the retiring Viceroy, Lord Curzon, who was then at Agra. Sir Bamfylde's position had been made exceedingly unpleasant by the organised refusal of the people of the

New Province to give him the usual honour which the Governors of Indian Provinces had been accustomed to receive. At Dacca the public practically refused to accord him a fitting reception. To add to his irritation, while he was received on his arrival at the town by scarcely four or five hundred people, most of whom were Mahomedans brought together by the personal influence of the Nabab of Dacca, a Nationalist worker coming the next day was received at the station by over five thousand people, and while the Lieutenant-Governor's state barge was lying on the river, an anti-partition demonstration was held under his very nose, in which from ten to fifteen thousand people were present. This was, as Sir Bamfylde himself declared, more than what even an angel could bear. When he went to Faridpur, it was reported in the newspapers that even the railway porters refused to touch his luggage, which had to be carried by police-constables. From Faridpur Sir Bamfylde went to meet Lord Curzon at Agra. What passed there in secret consultation between the retiring Viceroy, who was responsible for the Partition of Bengal, and the Lieutenant-Governor of the New Province, no one knows. But it was published in the papers that from Agra Sir Bamfylde ordered the despatch of a hundred Goorkhas, belonging to the Frontier Police, to Barisal. Sir Bamfylde went from Agra to Barisal, and while the hundred military police were drawn up on the river bank he invited Asvini Kumâr and other local leaders to a conference on board his state barge, and there insulted them openly, and threatened them with immediate arrest unless they withdrew a certain circular issued by them to the people, advising them of the legality of a peaceful boycott of British goods. Had Asvini Kumâr refused to withdraw that circular, the history of Sir Bamfylde's first visit to Barisal would have been differently written. The whole town was in a ferment, and the arrest of Asvini Kumâr at that time would have resulted in a serious riot, which even Sir Bamfylde's hundred Goorkhas would have found it impossible to quell. Asvini Kumâr saw the prospects of all this carnage, and he decided even to be adjudged a coward rather than, however indirectly, be

the cause of a bloody riot in his town. No demagogue ever thinks in this way. Few politicians in the position of Asvini Kumâr in any part of the world would have exercised such forbearance and sacrificed their public character for the sake of public peace. A self-assertive man would have defied the Lieutenant-Governor, and would have earned cheap martyrdom by going to prison for his refusal to withdraw an absolutely legal circular, though such a refusal might lead to blood-shed among the reckless and excited populace. Asvini Kumâr saved the situation in Barisal by his forbearance.

Sir Bamfylde won an apparent victory, but it was, after all, a mere physical victory. The moral victory was with Asvini Kumâr. For though Asvini Kumâr gave in to the bullying of the Lieutenant-Governor, there was no demoralisation either in him or in his people. Sir Bamfylde left his Goorkhas behind him in Barisal, and for some weeks they established what was described in the papers at the time a regular reign of terror in the town. Barisal has always been noted for its riotous populations. And yet that among such a population a handful of Goorkhas could commit such outrages as were reported in the papers from day to day, showed the moral hold of Asvini Kumâr on his people, and the restraining influence he has always been among them. Asvini Kumâr saw through the game of the Executive. The object of this Goorkha rule was clearly to exasperate the people and drive them to acts of lawlessness, such as would provide the Government with a decent plea to crush the Svadeshi Movement there by sheer force, and he refused to be played into the hands of his opponents. Though the Goorkhas committed many excesses, the people did not overstep the limits of law in a single instance. Their forbearance indeed had a tremendous moral influence on the Goorkhas themselves, and they had subsequently to be withdrawn from Barisal.

Asvini Kumâr's anxiety to avoid, almost at any cost, any kind of a physical conflict with the authorities was seen again when the Provincial Conference met the following year (April, 1906) in Barisal. This gathering was broken up by order of the Magistrate almost

at the point of the bayonet. A procession of nearly eight or nine hundred delegates from the different districts of the Province, including almost every prominent leader in the country, was also dispersed by the police, who made a free use of their quarterstaff and broke more than one head, under the very eyes of the District Superintendent of Police. The processionists were not even summoned to disperse peacefully and voluntarily before they were charged by the police. Asvini Kumâr had simply to raise his little finger and the excited populace of the town would have crushed the small band of police and all the executive officials like dry leaves in the hollow of a man's hand. But he was determined that the Movement with which he was connected should never be identified with any form of lawlessness, and his forbearance, misinterpreted by many ardent young men at the time as cowardice, saved the situation in Barisal once more, on that day.

But while he refused to have his people driven to any form of lawlessness, either by the insults of the Lieutenant-Governor or the unprovoked assaults of the local executive, he never loosened his hold or allowed his people to loosen their hold of the weapon of peaceful and lawful passive resistance. The more the officials became lawless, the stronger became the Boycott Movement in Barisal. And in no Bengal district has the prosecution of this economic Boycott been so little associated with any sort of violence or illegality as in Barisal. And the secret of it is to be found in the personal character and influence of this great leader of his people.

Asvini Kumâr is indeed a born leader of men. He is the only real leader that we have had as yet in Bengal, for he is the one man who may be said to possess a large and powerful personal following. And the secret of it is his character. Even his rankest enemies—and in modern public life even the best and sweetest of men cannot altogether avoid making a few enemies—have never found any reason to insinuate any unworthy motive or act to Asvini Kumâr. But purity alone, however much it may command admiration, does not always draw people's hearts. The secret

of Asvini Kumâr's influence is not merely the purity of his life, but, above all, the genuine sweetness of his disposition. Asvini Kumâr knows how to be a boy among boys, a youth among young men, an aristocrat among aristocrats, and a genuine proletarian among the proletariat. He is a Hindu among Hindus, and he knows also how to feel, think, and even talk like a Mahomedan among Mahomedans.

One little incident that occurred a little over a year ago may be mentioned as showing the inner character of the man, and the secret of his wonderful influence over his people. A person belonging to the Nama-Sûdra class, which may be said to constitute almost the very backbone of the Hindu peasantry of Barisal and other eastern districts of Bengal, but who are usually considered as very low in the social scale, went one day to see Asvini Kumâr. Asvini Kumâr was at that time living in a house-boat, and touring about in the district. As soon as this man went and accosted Asvini Kumâr he returned his salute, and, coming down from his chair, took his seat alongside of his visitor on the same carpet. When Asvini Kumâr asked him concerning the object of his visit, the man said:—

"I came to ask a question, but it has already been answered, and I have no need of troubling you any more about it."

Asvini Kumâr was surprised at the remark, and asked his visitor to explain himself. The man said that he had been told by some people that this cry of "Bande Mâtaram" was a mere humbug, for if the country be our Mother we must then be all brothers, but how then do the higher classes refuse to accept the lower classes as such? This question puzzled him, and he had come to Asvini Kumâr for a solution of it. But Asvini Kumâr, by leaving his seat and receiving a Nama-Sûdra peasant as his equal had answered the question practically.

To Asvini Kumâr every religion, so far as it proclaims the glory of God and preaches His love, is true. To him, therefore, it makes but little difference whether God is worshipped in a temple, a mosque, or a church. To him every man is the image of his



Maker, a symbol of God. The service of man is the service of the Lord. Family affections, social relations, economic arrangements, and political ordinances are all means for the realisation of the highest love of God. And this essentially religious spirit is the secret of his wonderful influence over a people with whom religion counts as the highest factor in life. The character of every public movement is best revealed in the character of its leaders. In Asvini Kumâr we have a most convincing proof of the profound spirituality of the present Nationalist Movement in Bengal.



## SRIJÛT KRÎSHNA KÛMÂR MÎTRA.

(Written April, 1909.)

Srijût Krîshna Kûmâr Mitrâ does not belong to what is called the Nationalist Party in India, but he is undoubtedly a prominent man in the Nationalist Movement. The Nationalist Movement is much larger than the Nationalist Party. This party is a much later growth than the movement of which it has commenced to take a lead. The Nationalist, or the Extremist Party, as it is called by its opponents, is hardly three years old, and even now it can hardly be called a party. It is more a school of thought than an organised and disciplined political party. Before 1906 there was only one National Party in India, and that was the Congress Party. It was only in the autumn of that year, when an attempt was made to secure the nomination of Srijût Bâl Gangâdhar Tilak to the Congress Presidency, that Congressmen almost all over the country divided themselves into two camps, one being called Moderates and the other Extremists. These names were not of their own choosing. They were invented and given to them by their common enemies of the Anglo-Indian Press. In Bengal, at any rate, both the schools disclaimed the names thus given to them, and claimed to be equally Nationalists. There have, in fact, been much less fundamental divergencies of views between these two schools in Bengal than in any other Indian province. In Bengal the so-called Moderates and the so-called Extremists have been united in the fundamental and positive methods of the Nationalist Movement. The Bengalee "Moderate," until the closing weeks of the last year, has been a

staunch advocate of Svadeshi and Boycott, National Education, and National Volunteering. The only points of difference between the two schools have been—(1) in regard to the ideal, and (2) in regard to the scope of the Boycott. The Bengalee Moderates proclaimed Colonial Self-Government as their ideal, instead of the absolute autonomy set up as the ultimate goal by the so-called Extremists, and, unlike the latter, they refused to extend the Boycott to all voluntary offices under the Government. To work in association with the Government wherever such association is likely to be useful and beneficial to the country, and in opposition to them when it is necessary in the public interest—this has been the avowed policy of the Bengalee “Moderates.” In this they stood apart from the so-called Extremists, who advocated an absolute dissociation from all official connections and obligations, except where they were absolutely enjoined by law. But whether “Moderates” or “Extremists,” every, or almost every, Bengalee public man belongs to the larger movement of Nationalism in India, whose one cry is “India for the Indians.”

To this class belongs Srijût Krîshna Kûmâr Mitra. Like his friend and leader, Srijût Sûrendranâth Bânérjee, Krishna Kûmâr has been one of the forces of Nationalism in Bengal. Indeed, we know it as a matter of fact that he has strongly repudiated this division of the people into rival political parties, and urged always for united action. This is what he persistently preached in his paper, “The Sanjibani,” which was at one time the real mouthpiece of English-educated Bengalees, especially of the Eastern Districts, where it had enormous influence. And if Krishna Kûmâr did find himself occasionally in open opposition to the so-called Extremists of Bengal, it was due not so much to vital difference of principle between them and himself, as to his personal love and regard for Bâbu Sûrendranâth Bânérjee, with whom he had worked all his life. Had not some of the Bengalee Extremists openly repudiated the leadership of Bâbu Sûrendranâth, Krishna Kûmâr would have been as much in association and sympathy with them as with the so-called Bengalee Moderates. But Moderate or Extre-

mist, every prominent public man in Bengal has been, and is, a Nationalist. Bengal has not as yet known the type represented by Perozeshâh Melitâ or Gopâl Krishna Gokhale in Bombay. And Krishna Kûmâr is by no means of that type.

And the chief reason of it is that Krishna Kûmâr is not a politician in the ordinary sense of the term. If Asvini Kûmâr approaches the type of the Hindu devotee, Krishna Kûmâr approaches that of the Hebrew prophet. In fact, both by temperament and training, Krishna Kûmâr is what may be called more Semitic and Christian than Hindu and Vaishnava. He belongs to a generation that had completely lost touch with the inner spirit and ancient traditions of their race. In early life he imbibed the spirit of religious and social revolt headed by Keshub Chunder Sen. The Brâhmo Samâj, or the Theistic Church of India, under Keshub Chunder Sen in his earlier days, was, in its tone and temper, distinctly more Hebraic than Hindu. The thought-leaders of the Brâhmo Samâj in those days were Theodore Parker and Francis Newman, and Miss Frances Power Cobbe on the theological and ethical side, and Victor Cousin and the Scotch Intuitionists on the speculative and philosophical side. The mind and spirit of Keshub Chunder and his followers fed on these teachings, and he himself represented at that time more the prophetic fervour of Hebrew theism than the transcendental depth or the devotional sweetness of Hindu Monism and Vaishnavic piety. Keshub Chunder gradually grew, later in life, into these national ideals no doubt, and he died more a Hindu than a Hebrew or a Christian in his spirit and aspirations. But Krishna Kûmâr had cut himself off from his leadership before these later phases of thought and devotion developed in the great Brâhmo leader, and has persistently kept up the earlier inspiration he had imbibed from him.

The Brâhmo-Samâj, under Keshub Chunder Sen, represented both the fruit of, and the earliest reaction against, the impact of the Hindu mind with the dominating thought and culture of modern Europe. It was not only the child of this new illumination, but also, at the same time, represented the earliest protest

of the Hindu spirit against being completely dominated by it. In both these aspects it was essentially a movement of freedom. It proclaimed the divine authority of human reason in the determination of truth, and openly discarded the time-honoured pretensions of religious scriptures to special and supernatural revelation. It acknowledged no prophets, accepted no priests, but set each individual free to seek and find the truth for himself or herself, and directly approach the Throne of Grace with his or her own prayers and aspirations, these aspirations of the devout spirit of man or woman finding their response and fulfilment in inspiration from God, and thus completing the highest process of spiritual and devotional exercises, and directly leading to the soul's salvation. This gospel of personal freedom naturally led to a movement of social reform which aimed at a thorough reconstruction of Indian, and particularly of Hindu domestic and social life, after the new ideal. Child-marriages and non-consensual marriages were discarded as an usurpation of personal rights in a matter of the greatest concern to the peace and happiness of the individual. The disabilities of Hindu widows in regard to re-marriages were openly removed for the same reason. Distinctions of caste, not only in the matter of eating and drinking, but also in the matter of marital relations, were completely discarded as immoral and injurious. The rights of the human personality to freely realise itself, without let or hindrance from undue social interference or sacerdotal or religious restraints, were proclaimed thus in every direction.

The Brâhmo-Samâj was, thus, a movement of freedom. In the days of his youth, when Krishna Kûmâr came under its influence, the Brâhmo-Samâj was essentially individualistic in its conceptions of personal rights and in its general philosophy of human freedom. It was, in some sense, the child of the European Illumination of the eighteenth century, and had the excessive individualistic emphasis of that great movement of protest. The genius of Keshub Chunder Sen, however, soon recognised the limits of individualism, and he spent the last years of his life in devising a

variety of means to correct and cure the evils of this excessive individualistic emphasis. To find a legitimate ground and sanction for individual impulses and notions, he fell back upon what was called the doctrine of individual inspiration. To correct the confusion and conflict arising out of the claim of each individual to direct divine inspiration, Keshub Chunder Sen fell back upon the Catholic doctrine of the Church as the ever-present instrument of communication between God and man, and set up the Council of the Apostles of the new creed, called Sree Durbâr, as an objective authority for the regulation and guidance of individual inspiration. The injurious tendencies of the individualism of the latter eighteenth and the earlier nineteenth century were manifested in three directions—in theology it developed atheism and scepticism; in social life it developed license and immorality; in politics it developed revolutionary anarchism. Keshub Chunder Sen soon recognised these tendencies, and was frightened by their apparition into taking refuge in a conservative creed, which he proclaimed as the fundamental creed of his Church. This creed was summed up in the three-fold loyalty, (1) to God, (2) to Church, and (3) to King. By means of this three-fold loyalty he tried to harmonise the movement of progress with the cause of order, and work out a reconciliation between authority and independence.

But Krîshna Kûmâr, having seceded from the leading of Keshub Chunder Sen before these developments, had absolutely no participation in them. His religious and social ideals have always continued to be those of the early days of the Brâhmo-Samâj. But his superior moral nature has always saved him from the logical excesses of his essentially individualistic philosophy. Ever since his youth Krîshna Kûmâr has accepted and proclaimed the authority of individual reason as the ultimate judge of truth, and that of individual conscience as the final arbiter of right and wrong; but he has never, in practical life, identified opinion with truth or mixed up personal impulses with the promptings of conscience. Krîshna Kûmâr has, therefore, been a reformer, but not a revolutionary in any sense of the term.

Constitutionally free from the extremely speculative tendencies of his race, Krishna Kûmâr has tenaciously clung to the simple faith of his youth. Though by no means incapable of very strong emotions, the type of piety which Krishna Kûmâr represents is decidedly more Semitic and volitional than Vaishnavic and emotional. His conscience has, therefore, been the main controlling force of his life. The voice of conscience has always been to him the very voice of his God. In his loyalty to conscience, Krishna Kûmâr represents among us that stern Puritan type of virile personality which worked up the Rebellion in England and founded a Republic in America.

Krishna Kûmâr is incapable of deliberately doing a thing which he believes to be wrong. But once convinced of the truth or justice of a cause, he will fight for it to the bitterest end, and will never shrink from making any sacrifice, however great, to serve it. Without the least suspicion of bravado, he has been the most fearless of our public men. At Barisal, in 1906, when the police charged a peaceful procession of delegates to the Bengal Provincial Conference with their quarter-staff, and were innocently breaking some heads in the discharge of their duty as guardians of peace and protectors of the people, Krishna Kûmâr was the only man who rushed between the unarmed and helpless delegates and their assailants, repelled an assaulting constable with his umbrella, dragged him to the Superintendent of Police, under whose evident instructions these assaults were being made, and literally ordered that officer to stop these illegal excesses; and the moral fervour of the man so completely cowed down that officer that he at once called back his men, and further assaults were stopped. Had the occasion demanded, and his conscience prompted him, Krishna Kûmâr could have faced a cannon's mouth with as much unconcern as that with which he rushed here between a pack of police hooligans and their helpless victims. When the order of the Magistrate of Barisal was brought to the Conference demanding its immediate breaking up, and armed police with fixed bayonets were walking up and down the street, waiting for a signal from the Superintendent to charge that peace-

ful gathering of absolutely unarmed men and women, Krishna Kûmâr was the only prominent man on the platform who refused to move out in submission to an unjust and illegal order. It was his duty to resist every wrong, and he would resist this wrong also, utterly regardless of whatever might happen, either to himself or even to the hundreds of ladies, and even children, who had come to the meeting with their elders. When it is a question of duty, no prudential considerations of any kind find any place in the thoughts of this man of conscience.

The Brâhmo-Samâj, of which Krishna Kûmâr has been a leader and minister for many years past, professes a very simple creed, and is guided by a very simple philosophy of life. It believes in God, in the duty of worship, the efficacy of prayer, and in the existence of a future life. It refuses to accept any authority in matters of faith, except that of man's own reason and conscience, and repudiates all incarnations and mediations. Man's relations with his Maker are immediate and personal. It proclaims the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. Its code of duty is summed up in the worship of God and the pursuit of objects that are pleasing to Him. Love of God and the service of man constitute all the rites and sacraments of this simple creed. And this simple creed and philosophy of life and this code of duty contain the entire inventory of the life and character of Krishna Kûmâr. His activities, whether as a teacher of youth, or as a social reformer or political worker, or as a preacher of religion, have all been prompted and guided by this simple creed and philosophy. Social and political reforms, as calculated to improve human character, remove human misery, and promote love and justice among men, are supreme demands of Krishna Kûmâr's religion. His patriotism is only an expression of his piety. But though the sincerity and strength of his devotion to his Motherland stand as high as that of any of our public men, in one sense



Krishna Kûmâr is much less of a Nationalist than perhaps most of them. Nationalism as a philosophy of life and as a necessary element in the evolution of universal humanity, has found as yet no place, I am afraid, in Krishna Kûmâr's general scheme of thought. The prevailing and popular social philosophy of the Brâhmo-Samâj has so far been more pronounced on the cosmopolitan than on the national side. As in Brâhmo theology nothing mediates between the individual and the Universal, so in Brâhmo sociology nothing stands, as a medium of relation or realisation, between individual man and universal humanity. The organic conception of society and the general social philosophy that is rapidly growing out of it in our age, have not as yet been able to powerfully influence the social ideals of the Brâhmo-Samâj as a body. Consequently, this community has not been able as yet to receive the inspiration of what may be called rational and philosophic nationalism. On the other hand, being essentially a movement of protest and reform, and, as such, constantly emphasising the evil and unreason of the old social order and the traditional social ideals and religious beliefs of the people, it has lost the advantage of that natural conservatism which finds the motif of nationalism among the general unthinking populace everywhere. Few Brâhmos can, therefore, be real nationalists in either sense of the term; and Krishna Kûmâr is not, in any way, identified with these few. An abstract cosmopolitanism is the dominating principle of the social philosophy which he has in common with the orthodox section of his own denomination. Krishna Kûmâr is, therefore, free from that persistent and almost constitutional antipathy against the foreigner that so frequently forms such an ugly feature of nationalism and patriotism all the world over. His patriotism is essentially an expression of his general humanity. The inspiration of his political activities, as much as that of his social revolt, comes from his inherent love of justice and hatred of wrong more than from any special and passionate love for his own peo-

ple, as his own people, and standing apart from the other peoples of the world. He would fight as strenuously for redressing the wrongs of the Hottentot as he has been doing for the emancipation of the Hindu. Krishna Kûmâr is one of the few Indian public men who can say, in the words of the English poet:—

I live for those that love me,  
For those that know me true,  
For the Heaven that smiles above me,  
And waits my coming too.

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For every cause that lacks assistance,  
For every cause that needs resistance,  
The future in the distance,  
And the good that I can do.



## SREEJUT ARAVINDA GHOSE.

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(Written July, 1909.)

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The youngest in age among those who stand in the forefront of the Nationalist propaganda in India, but in endowment, education, and character, perhaps, superior to them all—Aravinda seems distinctly marked out by Providence to play in the future of this movement a part not given to any of his colleagues and contemporaries. The other leaders of the movement have left their life behind them: Aravinda has his before him. Nationalism is their last love: it is Aravinda's first passion. They are burdened with the cares and responsibilities of large families or complex relations: Aravinda has a small family and practically no cumulative obligations. His only care is for his country—the Mother, as he always calls her. His only recognised obligations are to her. Nationalism, at the best, a concern of the intellect with some, at the lowest a political cry and aspiration with others, is with Aravinda the supreme passion of his soul. Few, indeed, have grasped the full force and meaning of the Nationalist ideal as Aravinda has done. But even of these very few—though their vision may be clear, their action is weak. Man cannot, by a fiat of his will, at once recreate his life. Our Karma follows us with relentless insistence from day to day and from death to death. To see the vision of truth and yet not to be possessed by that supreme passion for it which burns up all other desires and snaps asunder, like ashen bands, all other ties and obligations—this is the divine tragedy of most finer natures. They have to cry out with St. Paul at every turn of life's tortuous path—"The Spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." But blessed are they for whom this tragic antithesis between the ideal and the real has been cancelled: for whom to know the truth is to love it, to love the truth is to strive after it, and to strive after the truth is to attain it; in whom there is no disparity, either in time or degree, between the idea

and its realisation:—in whom the vision of the ideal, by its own intrinsic strength at once attunes every craving of the flesh, every movement of the mind, every emotion of the heart, and every impulse of the will—to itself: who have to strive for its realisation, not within, but without: who have to struggle not with their own Self but with the Not-Self, who have to fight and conquer not themselves but others, in order to establish the Kingdom of God realised by them in the relations of their own inner life, in the outer actualities and appointments of the life of their own people or of humanity at large. These are, so to say, the chosen of God. They are born leaders of men. Commissioned to serve special ends affecting the life and happiness of large masses of men, they bear a charmed life. They may be hit, but cannot be hurt. They may be struck, but are never stricken. Their towering optimism, and the Grace of God, turn every evil into good, every opposition into a help, every loss into a gain. By the general verdict of his countrymen, Aravinda stands to-day among these favoured sons of God.

Birth is not an accident. "Accident of birth" is the language of infidel empiricism. Nature has no room for accidents in her schemes. It is only man's inability to trace her secrets that has coined this word to cover his ignorance. Man's birth is no more an accident than the rise and fall of tides. There can really be no accidents in evolution, the law of natural selection has killed their chance altogether. But does the operation of natural selection start only after the birth of the organism or does it precede it? Is it only a biological, or also a psychological law? Like the problems of biology, those of psychology also are inexplicable, except on this theory. The inference is irresistible that there is such a thing as natural selection even in the psychic plane. The spirit, by the impulse of its own needs, must chose and order the conditions of its own life even as the physical organism does. This is the psychic significance of heredity. Life from this point of view is not a lottery, but a matter really of determined choice. The needs of the organism supply the organs in the lower kingdom: the desires

of the heart collect and create their necessary equipment and environment for the human being. On no other hypothesis can the riddle of the human life be explained more satisfactorily. It may not explain everything, but it explains many things absolutely un-understandable and inexplicable on any other hypothesis. This at least has been the Hindu view from time immemorial. A crude intuition at first, it became a settled conviction with the people subsequently, with a fundamental philosophy of causation behind it. And this theory stands curiously verified in Aravinda Ghose.

Two strong currents of thoughts, ideals, and aspirations, met together and strove for supremacy in Bengal, among the generation to which Aravinda's parents belonged. One was the current of Hindu Nationalism—of the revived life, culture and ideals of the nation that had lain dormant for centuries and had been discarded as lower and primitive by the first batch of English-educated Hindus, especially in Bengal. The other was the current of Indo-Anglicism—the on-rushing life, culture and ideals of the foreign rulers of the land, which, expressing themselves through British law and administration on the one side, and the new schools and universities on the other, threatened to swamp and drown the original culture and character of the people. The two stocks from which Aravinda sprang represented these two conflicting forces in the country. His maternal grandfather, Râj Nârâyan Bose, was one of the makers of modern Bengal. A student of David Hare, a pupil of De Rozario, an alumnus of the Hindu College, the first English college that had the support of both the Hindu community and the British rulers of the Province, Râj Nârâyan Bose started life as a social and religious reformer. But while he caught as fully as any one else among his contemporaries the impulse of the new illumination, he did not lose so completely, as many of them did, his hold on the fundamental spirit of the culture and civilisation of his race. He joined the Brâhmo-Samâj, under Maharshi Debendra Nâth Tagore, but felt repelled by the denational spirit of the later developments in that movement under

Keshub Chunder Sen. In fact, it is difficult to say to which of its two leaders—Debendra Nāth or Rāj Nārāyan, the Adi or the older Brahma Samaj, as it came to be called after Keshub Chunder Sen seceded from it and established the Brahmo-Samaj of India—was more indebted for its intense and conservative nationalism. But it may be safely asserted that while Debendra Nāth's nationalism had a dominating theological note, Rāj Nārāyan's had both a theological and social, as well as a political emphasis. In him it was not merely the spirit of Hinduism that rose up in arms against the onslaught of European Christianity, but the whole spirit of Indian culture and manhood stood up to defend and assert itself against every form of undue foreign influence and alien domination. While Keshub Chunder Sen pleaded for the recognition of the truths in the Hindu scriptures side by side with those in the Bible, Rāj Nārāyan Bose proclaimed the superiority of Hinduism to Christianity. While Keshub Chunder was seeking to reconstruct Indian, and especially Hindu, social life, more or less after the British model, Rāj Nārāyan's sturdy patriotism and national self-respect rebelled against the enormity, and came forward to establish the superiority of Hindu social economy to the Christian social institutions and ideals. He saw the on-rush of European goods into Indian markets, and tried to stem the tide by quickening what we would now call the Svadeshi spirit, long before any one else had thought of it. It was under his inspiration that a Hindu Mêlâ, or National Exhibition, was started a full quarter of a century before the Indian National Congress thought of an Indian Industrial Exhibition. The founder of this Hindu Mêlâ was also the first Bengalee who organised gymnasia for the physical training of the youths of the nation. Stick and sword plays, and other ancient but decadent sports and pastimes of the people that have come into vogue recently, were originally revived at the Hindu Mêlâ under Rāj Nārāyan Bose's inspiration and instruction. Rāj Nārāyan Bose did not openly take any part in politics, but his writings and speeches did a good deal to create that spirit of self-respect and self-assertion in the educated classes that

have since found such strong expression in our recent political activities.

A strong conservatism, based upon a reasoned appreciation of the lofty spirituality of the ancient culture and civilisation of the country; a sensitive patriotism, born of a healthy and dignified pride of race; and a deep piety expressing itself through all the varied practical relations of life—these were the characteristics of the life and thought of Rāj Nārāyan Bose. He represented the high-water mark of the composite culture of his country—Védāntic, Islamic, and European. When he discoursed on Brahma-Jñān or Knowledge of God he brought to mind the ancient Hindu gnostics of the Upanishads. When he cited verses from the Persian poets, filling the ear with their rich cadence—with his eyes melting in love and his mobile features aglow with a supreme spiritual passion—he reminded one of the old Moslem devotees. And when he spoke on the corruptions of current religion, or the soulless selfishness of modern politics, he appeared as a nineteenth century rationalist and iconoclast of Europe. In his mind and life he was at once a Hindu Maharshi, a Moslem Sufi, and a Christian theist of the Unitarian type; and like Rām Mohan Roy, the founder of the Brāhmo-Samāj, of which Rāj Nārāyan Bose was for many years the honoured president, he also seems to have worked out a synthesis in his own spiritual life between the three dominant world-cultures that have come face to face in modern India. Like Rām Mohan, Rāj Nārāyan also seems to have realised in himself, intellectually and spiritually, that ideal of composite nationhood in India, which the present generation has been called upon to actualise in the social, economic, and political relations of their country. Rāj Nārāyan Bose was also an acknowledged leader in Bengalee literature. A writer in the "Modern Review" (Calcutta) calls Rāj Nārāyan Bose the "Grandfather of Indian Nationalism." He was Aravinda's maternal grandfather; and Aravinda owes not only his rich spiritual nature, but even his very superior literary capacity to his inherited endowments from his mother's line.

If his maternal grandfather represented the ancient spiritual forces of his nation, Aravinda's father, Dr.

Kristadhan Ghose, represented to a very large extent the spirit of the new illumination in his country. Dr. Ghose was essentially a product of English education and European culture. A man of exceptional parts, he finished his education in England, and, taking his degree in medicine, entered the medical service of the Indian Government. He was one of the most successful Civil Surgeons of his day, and, had his life been spared, he would have assuredly risen to the highest position in his service open to any native of India. Like the general body of Indian young men who came to finish their education in England in his time, Kristadhan Ghose was steeped in the prevailing spirit of Anglicism. Like all of them, he was a thoroughly Anglicised Bengalee in his ways of life. But, unlike many of them, underneath his foreign clothing and ways, he had a genuine Hindu heart and soul. Anglicism distorts Hindu character, cripples, where it cannot kill, the inherited altruism of the man, and makes him more or less neglectful of the numerous family and social obligations under which every Hindu is born. Like the original Anglo-Saxon, his Indian imitation also lives first and foremost for himself, his wife and children; and though he may recognise the claims of his relations to his charity, he scarcely places his purse at their service as an obligation. But Kristadhan Ghose was an exception. Though he affected the European's way of living, he never neglected the social obligations of the Hindu. His purse was always open for his needy relations. The poor of the town where he served and lived had in him a true friend and a ready help. In fact, his regard for the poor frequently led him to sacrifice to their present needs the future prospects of his own family and children. He had his sons educated in England; and so great was his admiration for English life and English culture that he sent them out here even before they had received any schooling in their own country. But his charities made such constant and heavy inroads into his tolerably large income that he could not always keep his own children, living in England, provided with sufficient funds for their board and schooling. Sons of comparatively rich parents, they were brought up



almost in abject poverty in a friendless country where wealth counts so much, not only physically, but also intellectually and morally. Keen of intellect, tender of heart, impulsive and generous almost to recklessness, regardless of his own wants, but sensitive to the sufferings of others—this was the inventory of the character of Dr. Kristadhan Ghose. The rich blamed him for his recklessness, the man of the world condemned him for his absolute lack of prudence, the highest virtue in his estimation. But the poor, the widow, and the orphan loved him for his selfless pity, and his soulful benevolence.

When death overtook him, in the very prime of life, there was desolation in many a poor home in his district. It not only left his own children in absolute poverty, but destroyed the source of ready relief to many helpless families among his relations and neighbours. His quick intellectual perceptions, his large sympathies, his selflessness, characterised by an almost absolute lack of what the man of the world, always working with an eye to the main chance, calls prudence, as a matter of personal calculation—these are Aravinda's inheritance in his father's line.

As a boy, Aravinda received his early education in a public school in England. The old headmaster of this school is reported to have said, when Aravinda's name came prominently before the British public in connection with the State trial of which he was made the principal accused, this time last year—that of all the boys who passed through his hands during the last twenty-five or thirty years, Aravinda was by far and above the most richly endowed in intellectual capacity. From this school he went to Cambridge, where he distinguished himself as a student of European classics, and passed the Indian Civil Service examination with great credit. Failing, however, to stand the required test in horsemanship, he was not allowed to enter the Covenanted Service of the Indian Government. But returning to India, he found employment in the Native State of Baroda, where his endowments and scholarship soon attracted the notice of the authorities, leading to his appointment to the post of Vice-Principal of the State College. Had Aravinda cared for earthly

honours or wealth, he had a very splendid opening for both in Baroda. He was held in great respect by the Mahārāja. He was loved by the educated classes in the State. He was exceedingly popular with the general public. All these opened very large possibilities of preferment before him in the service of this premier Native State in India.

But there was a new awakening in the country. A new school of thought had arisen, demanding a thorough reconsideration of the old and popular political, economic, and educational ideas and ideals of the people. It abjured the old mendicant methods of prayer, protest and petition. It proclaimed a new gospel of self-help and self-reliance. It called out to the spirit of India to come to its own, to stand upon its own inner strength, and put forth its own native efforts for the realisation of its true native life. It called aloud for leaders and workers—for the poet, the prophet, the philosopher, the statesman, the organiser and man of action, to help the sacred cause. It laid on all who would accept the call the heaviest self-sacrifice yet demanded of any public man in modern India. It wanted men who would not only, as hitherto, give to their country their leisure moments and their idle pennies, but who would consecrate all their working hours and their hard earnings to the service of the Motherland. The call went home to the heart of Aravinda. His own native Province called for him. It laid on him the vow of poverty. It offered him the yoke of the saviours of their people and the uplifters of humanity—the yoke of calumny, persecution, imprisonment and exile. Aravinda obeyed the Mother's call, accepted her stern conditions, and cheerfully took up her chastening yoke. He gave up his place in Baroda, worth £560 a year, to take up the duties of Principal in the College started at Calcutta, under the new National Council of Education, on a bare subsistence allowance of £10 a month.

This movement of National Education owed its origin to the latest education-policy of the Indian Government, who sought to turn the institutions of public instruction in the country to distinctly political ends. The old education had given

birth to wide-spread disaffection. It had called into being "the discontented B.A.'s." The new educational policy initiated by Lord Curzon was directed towards curing this evil. Its aim was to manufacture loyal citizens—men who would be eternally content to remain loyal to the autocratic government in their country, without any desire for free citizenship. The movement of National Education was the people's reply to this official policy. It took definite shape and form as a result of the persecution of schoolboys, by the Executive in Bengal, for their participation in the new political movements in the country. But it had a more fundamental need. The officially-controlled education had been condemned by both friends and foes alike. It was shallow and rootless. It imparted the shadow, but not the substance, of modern culture to the youths of the nation. It was artificial, because foreign in both its spirit and form. It led to a fearful waste of youthful time and energy by imposing the necessity of learning a foreign language, to receive instructions through its medium in all the higher branches of study. It was controlled by an alien Bureaucracy, in the interests, mainly, of their own political position, and only secondarily in those of the real intellectual life of the pupils. It was excessively literary, and detrimental to the industrial and economic life of the country. The movement of National Education was started to counteract these evils of the officially-controlled system of public instruction. It proposed to promote—"Education, scientific, literary, and technical, on National lines, and under National control." But though owing its initiation to the threats of the Government to close the doors of the official schools and colleges and universities against those who would take any part—even to the extent of simply attending—in any political meeting or demonstration—the National Education Movement in Bengal sought to avoid all open causes of friction with the authorities, and professed to work *independent of* but not in *opposition to* the Government. Political in its origin, it tried to avoid all conflicts with the authorities by assuming an absolutely non-political attitude.

The school of thought to which Aravinda belonged did not support this declaration of the National Council of Education, and could not appreciate this needless dread, as they thought, of offending official susceptibilities. But they had to accept the verdict of the majority. One of the most unfortunate things in modern public life is the dependence of all large public movements on the help and support of the wealthy classes in the community. Large and organised movements in our times cannot be carried on without large and substantial financial support; and the rich are not willing, as they were in the more primitive times, to lend their support to any institution without seeking to control it. This unfortunate condition lowers the intellectual and moral tone of many a public institution, which, though financed with the monies of the richer classes, would have been able, without their personal intervention or control, to keep up a very superior intellectual or moral standard. This is particularly injurious in comparatively primitive communities, where realised wealth has not yet had time to ally itself with high culture, and where, owing to the absence of a vigorous and free national life, it has but little incentive and lesser opportunities for cultivating such an alliance.

The Nationalists are a poor party in India, and the National Council of Education, though it owed its initiation to their efforts, passed, almost from the very beginning, beyond their sphere of influence, and Aravinda's position as the nominal head of the National College, practically controlled by men of different views and opinions, became almost from the very beginning more or less anomalous.

This was, from some points of view, very unfortunate. Aravinda had received the best modern education that any man of his country and generation could expect to have. He had for some years been a teacher of youth in Baroda, and had acquired considerable practical experience in his art. He had clearly realised the spirit and actualities of the life of his nation, and knew how the most advanced principles of modern pedagogy could be successfully worked into a thoroughly national system of education in India. He went to Calcutta as an educationist. He

knew that the foundations of national independence and national greatness must be laid in a strong and advanced system of national education. He had a political ideal, no doubt; but politics meant to him much more than is ordinarily understood by the term. It was not a game of expediency, but a school of human character, and, in its turn, reacting upon it, should develop and strengthen the manhood and womanhood of the nation. Education could no more be divorced from politics than it could be divorced from religion or morals. Any system of education that helps such isolation and division between the various organic relations of life, is mediæval, and not modern. It is the education of the cloister—abstract and unreal; not the education of the modern man, eager to realise his fullest manhood in and through every relation of life. Aravinda is an apostle of modern education. Indeed, his ideal of modern education is even higher than what is understood by modern education ordinarily in Europe. It is a supremely spiritual ideal. Its aim is to actualise the highest and deepest God-consciousness of the human soul in the outer life and appointments of human society. It was the temptation of having an open field for the realisation of this lofty educational ideal which brought Aravinda to Calcutta. Had he been given a free hand in the new National College there, that institution would have opened an altogether new chapter not only in the history of modern education in India, but, perhaps in the whole world. To work the realism of the spirit of modern culture into the mould of the idealism of ancient theosophy, would not only secure for India her lost position as teacher of humanity, but would, perchance, even save modern civilisation from total collapse and destruction under the pressure of a gross and greedy industrialism.

But, unfortunately, neither individuals nor communities can easily break away from their own past. Most of the members of the new National Council of Education in Bengal were products of the old university. Some of the leading men in the new organisation had been closely associated, for many years, with the actual working out of the old vicious system. Steeped

same time the finest class of the peasantry of Bengal. Owing to the larger security against repeated enhancement of rents afforded by the Permanent Settlement in Bengal, these Nama-Sudras are perhaps the most prosperous of Indian agriculturalists. In some cases they even own the lands they cultivate. British policy and administration have given them a status which they never had as a caste, either under the ancient Hindu or the later Mahomedan régime. All these have combined to quicken a spirit of freedom in them which constantly chafes under the social inferiority imposed by the orthodox Hindu social economy. This offers an excellent opportunity to the Christian missionaries, which they have not been slow to utilise, and increasing numbers of this caste in Barisal and the neighbouring districts were being converted to Christianity. As a missionary of the Brâhmo-Samâj, Manoranjan worked among these people with marked success for some time, and appreciably checked the progress of the foreign mission propaganda among them. His social rank and position, which he had openly adjured for conscience' sake, his strong commonsense, his intimate knowledge of the life and thoughts of the common people, added to his natural gifts of oratory, made him very popular among people who had not received an English education, and who had no familiarity with foreign ways of thought and modes of expression.

But the Brâhmo-Samâj could not keep him long. Like Asvini Kumâr, Manoranjan also came under the influence of Pundit Bijoy Krishna Goswami, and gradually drifted away from the movement of the Brâhmo-Samâj. If the Brâhmo-Samâj had visibly checked the progress of Christianity among English-educated Indians, the Bhakti Movement of Pundit Bijoy Krishna Goswami appreciably checked the progress of the propaganda of the Brâhmo-Samâj among a large section of English-educated Bengalees. Pundit Bijoy Krishna was himself for the greater part of his life a missionary of the Brâhmo-Samâj. Descended from Advaitacharya, the contemporary and coadjutor of Sree Chaitanya, his family had been the spiritual teachers of the Vaishnavas of Bengal for

nearly four hundred years. Both by heredity and training, Pundit Bijoy Krishna had always the spirit of Vaishnavic piety in him, and if he imbibed in his early youth his rationalistic ideas from Keshub Chunder Sen, in his own turn he contributed more than anyone else to develop a deeper and fervent spirituality in the movement headed by that great reformer. The Brâhmo-Samâj received its emotional note almost entirely from Pundit Bijoy Krishna. It was, however, unable to appreciate and accommodate the later developments of this great saint and sage, who had to resign his connection with this body towards the end of his life. He soon became the centre of a new movement which not only drew earnest souls within its fold from every part of Bengal, but received recognition from every class and sect of holy men all over India. At the great gathering of Hindu saints and sannyasis at Allahabad in 1896, Pundit Bijoy Krishna was received as their equal by all the holy men of India assembled there. Manoranjan was present at Allahabad with his master, and it was his contact and conversation with the holy men of his country, added to the inspiration of his Guru, which recreated his faith in the culture and the high destiny of his race.

Pundit Bijoy Krishna's creed and philosophy were absolutely free from the reactionary spirit which characterised the general Hindu Revival of the closing years of the last century in India. These had declared open war against the liberal religious movements in the country. They sought to revive the mediæval faiths and ideas and perpetuate the current social institutions of the land. Theirs was, thus, in some sense a work of resistance, so far as modern thoughts and ideals were concerned. Pundit Bijoy Krishna's movement was, however, fundamentally different from these revivals, inasmuch as he did not deny the validity of the work of the Brâhmo-Samâj, with which he had himself been so prominently connected at one time, but simply pointed to a further development from which that body seemed to shrink. The Brâhmo-Samâj was the product of a dual influence, one being the influence of modern European illumination, which was essentially rationalistic and

in the traditions of this old education, they could hardly be expected to thoroughly enter into the spirit of modern pedagogy. They were willing to give fair room to the new principles, as an experiment; but could hardly give them their absolute and whole-hearted support, as truths. It seemed to them like jumping into the unknown. While accepting the principle of National Education as education "on national lines" and "under national control," and, consequently, pledged not to accept any official aid, they were not free from the fear of possible official opposition, which, if once aroused, would make their work, they thought, absolutely impossible. They had a real dread of the Bureaucracy, and no strong confidence, really, in their own people. The dominating and declared ideal of the new Council, consequently, came to be not in any way to *supplant*, but only to *supplement*, the existing Government-and-University-system of education in the country. A timid, temporising spirit, so galling to the reformer and the man with new visions and large ideas, generally guided the work of the National Council, and it made it almost impossible for Aravinda to throw himself heart and soul into his educational work in Calcutta. His place in the National College, though he was its nominal Principal, was not really that of organiser and initiator, but simply of a teacher of language and history, even as it had been in the Maharajah's College at Baroda. He had left Baroda in the hope of finding a wider scope of beneficent and patriotic activity in the new college in Calcutta. That hope was not realised. Almost from the very beginning he saw the hopelessness of working out a truly modern and thoroughly national system of education, through the organisation at whose service he had so enthusiastically placed himself.

But the man possessed by pure passion creates, where he cannot find them ready-made for him, his own instruments for the realisation of his supreme end in life. And wider fields of public usefulness were soon opened before Aravinda. The Nationalist School in Bengal was without a daily English organ. A new paper was started. Aravinda was invited to join its staff. A joint stock company was shortly floated to



run it, and Aravinda became one of the directors. This paper—"Bande Mataram"—at once secured for itself a recognised position in Indian journalism. The hand of the master was in it, from the very beginning. Its bold attitude, its vigorous thinking, its clear ideas, its chaste and powerful diction, its scorching sarcasm and refined witticism, were unsurpassed by any journal in the country, either Indian or Anglo-Indian. It at once raised the tone of every Bengalee paper, and compelled the admiration of even hostile Anglo-Indian editors. Morning after morning, not only Calcutta, but the educated community almost in every part of the country, eagerly awaited its vigorous pronouncements on the stirring questions of the day. It even forced itself upon the notice of the callous and self-centred British press. Long extracts from it commenced to be reproduced, week after week, even in the exclusive columns of the "Times" in London. It was a force in the country which none dared to ignore, however much they might fear or hate it, and Aravinda was the leading spirit, the central figure, in the new journal. The opportunities that were denied him in the National College he found in the pages of the "Bande Mataram," and from a tutor of a few youths he thus became the teacher of a whole nation.



## SRIJUT MANORANJAN GUHA-THAKURTA.

(Written May, 1909.)

Few people outside Bengal had heard of Srijut Manoranjan Guha-Thakurta until his arrest and deportation last December, without any public indictment or trial, made his name a household word all over India. And the reason of it is that Manoranjan had never been a prominent figure in Indian politics all his life. Of about the same age as Srijut Asvini Kumar Datta, Manoranjan has been a preacher of religion. Unlike the other leaders of the Nationalist thought in Bengal, Manoranjan had never been to any English school. But endowed with large intellectual powers, his native talents made up very largely for his want of regular school or collegiate education. Descended from the stock of Maharaja Pratapaditya, whose glorious but tragic career represented in Bengal at the time of Akbar the same movement in Hindu nation-building in Mahomedan India, which Sivaji represented with greater success, and on a much larger and imperial scale, in Maharashtra at the time of Aurangzeeb—Manoranjan belongs to one of the highest castes of Bengalee Hindus, and can claim social precedence of every non-Brahmin, British-manufactured, Raja or Maharaja in the Province. Like Asvini Kumar, Manoranjan also belongs to Barisal, and, like him, he too came in early youth under the influence of the Brâhmo-Samâj, and was for some years a missionary and minister of that church. Possessing quite exceptional gifts of oratory, and fairly well versed in the traditions and legendary lore of his people, Manoranjan was the most successful preacher of the new social and religious ideals to the masses of Bengal that the Brâhmo-Samâj ever had. There is a very strong community of Nama-Sudras in Barisal and the neighbouring districts of Khulna and Faridpur. Orthodox Hinduism has relegated them to an inferior social position. But they represent at the

same time the finest class of the peasantry of Bengal. Owing to the larger security against repeated enhancement of rents afforded by the Permanent Settlement in Bengal, these Nama-Sudras are perhaps the most prosperous of Indian agriculturalists. In some cases they even own the lands they cultivate. British policy and administration have given them a status which they never had as a caste, either under the ancient Hindu or the later Mahomedan régime. All these have combined to quicken a spirit of freedom in them which constantly chafes under the social inferiority imposed by the orthodox Hindu social economy. This offers an excellent opportunity to the Christian missionaries, which they have not been slow to utilise, and increasing numbers of this caste in Barisal and the neighbouring districts were being converted to Christianity. As a missionary of the Brâhmo-Samâj, Manoranjan worked among these people with marked success for some time, and appreciably checked the progress of the foreign mission propaganda among them. His social rank and position, which he had openly adjured for conscience' sake, his strong commonsense, his intimate knowledge of the life and thoughts of the common people, added to his natural gifts of oratory, made him very popular among people who had not received an English education, and who had no familiarity with foreign ways of thought and modes of expression.

But the Brâhmo-Samâj could not keep him long. Like Asvini Kumâr, Manoranjan also came under the influence of Pundit Bijoy Krishna Goswami, and gradually drifted away from the movement of the Brâhmo-Samâj. If the Brâhmo-Samâj had visibly checked the progress of Christianity among English-educated Indians, the Bhakti Movement of Pundit Bijoy Krishna Goswami appreciably checked the progress of the propaganda of the Brâhmo-Samâj among a large section of English-educated Bengalees. Pundit Bijoy Krishna was himself for the greater part of his life a missionary of the Brâhmo-Samâj. Descended from Advaitacharya, the contemporary and coadjutor of Sree Chaitanya, his family had been the spiritual teachers of the Vaishnavas of Bengal for

nearly four hundred years. Both by heredity and training, Pundit Bijoy Krishna had always the spirit of Vaishnavic piety in him, and if he imbibed in his early youth his rationalistic ideas from Keshub Chunder Sen, in his own turn he contributed more than anyone else to develop a deeper and fervent spirituality in the movement headed by that great reformer. The Brâhmo-Samâj received its emotional note almost entirely from Pundit Bijoy Krishna. It was, however, unable to appreciate and accommodate the later developments of this great saint and sage, who had to resign his connection with this body towards the end of his life. He soon became the centre of a new movement which not only drew earnest souls within its fold from every part of Bengal, but received recognition from every class and sect of holy men all over India. At the great gathering of Hindu saints and sannyasis at Allahabad in 1896, Pundit Bijoy Krishna was received as their equal by all the holy men of India assembled there. Manoranjan was present at Allahabad with his master, and it was his contact and conversation with the holy men of his country, added to the inspiration of his Guru, which recreated his faith in the culture and the high destiny of his race.

Pundit Bijoy Krishna's creed and philosophy were absolutely free from the reactionary spirit which characterised the general Hindu Revival of the closing years of the last century in India. These had declared open war against the liberal religious movements in the country. They sought to revive the mediæval faiths and ideas and perpetuate the current social institutions of the land. Theirs was, thus, in some sense a work of resistance, so far as modern thoughts and ideals were concerned. Pundit Bijoy Krishna's movement was, however, fundamentally different from these revivals, inasmuch as he did not deny the validity of the work of the Brâhmo-Samâj, with which he had himself been so prominently connected at one time, but simply pointed to a further development from which that body seemed to shrink. The Brâhmo-Samâj was the product of a dual influence, one being the influence of modern European illumination, which was essentially rationalistic and

deistic, and the other was the influence of the ancient theosophy of the Upanishads. Theologically, its prevailing emphasis was more on what is called the Abstract Universal than on what is indicated as the Concrete Universal. The traditional Brahma-jñân or Hindu gnosticism more decidedly leant towards the abstract and the transcendental than towards the concrete and the immanent. It did not deny the immanent aspect of the Absolute, but relegated it to a lower place, to the realm of nescience or avidya or maya. All conceptions of relations implying duality warred against the monistic theory of philosophic Hinduism, and had, therefore, to be got rid of for the apprehension of the highest reality and truth. The ultimate Reality is pure Being; it is different from all that we know and different from all that we do not know. It is not an object of our senses, neither is it an object of our mind or thought, for all thought is through the relations of subject and object, and where all relations are cancelled there all thoughts also must cease. But though thought and being have been identified by some philosophers, it is, however, found at the final analysis to be only an expression of being and not the being itself. Hindu gnosticism claims experience of a state of consciousness where all thought ceases but consciousness still remains. To ordinary men and women thought and consciousness are one; and the loss of thought means to them loss of consciousness. They regard it as a state of unconsciousness. But to the Hindu gnostic, this loss of the sense of duality and relations means not an unconscious, but a superconscious state, not the loss, but the highest perfection of being. In this state the knower exists in his own self. He then realises the Absolute as the Absolute in his own self as his own self. But even this language is only metaphorical; in the highest cognition of the Self there is neither in nor as. It is not knowledge, but direct realisation. It is—Aparakshanubhuti, as we have it in Sanskrit—immediate cognition. It is indescribable, they say, it is unthinkable, it is known by those only who have attained it. This is the last word of the Vedânta. This is the ultimate teaching of the Upanishads. This is the

truth of the highest yoga or union of the soul and the Over-Soul. So far as the Brâhmo-Samâj is filiated to the ancient gnosticism of India, this is its highest theological ideal. So far as it is filiated to modern European thought and theology, the Brâhmo-Samâj is partly deistic and partly theistic in the Christian sense of the term. Like Christian Unitarianism, the logic of popular Brahmoism is essentially deistic, though like the Unitarians, in their practical devotions and piety the Brahmos also are essentially theistic.

Towards the close of his life, Pundit Bijoy Krishna went beyond the theosophy of the Upanishads or the Vedânta. He did not deny the truth of the Brahmo ideal of Brahma-jnân, or direct and immediate divine cognition. He even accepted the negations of the Brahmo creed as a necessary stage in the progress of the soul towards true divine knowledge. But in his later life he proclaimed a higher stage, higher than the rationalism of the Brâhmo-Samâj and the gnosticism of the Upanishads. After the Upanishads came the Puranas, after the gnosticism of the Vedânta came the gospel of love and faith of the Vaishnavas. As the theosophy of the Upanishads was an advance upon the Abstract-Universalism of the Vedântas. Universalism of the Vaishnavas came as an advance upon the Abstract-Universalism of the Vedântas. Each preceding stage was a necessary moment in the evolution of each succeeding stage. Pundit Bijoy Krishna's creed and philosophy, thus, summed up the highest thought and philosophy of the Hindus. It was to some extent a new synthesis of the Hindu thought of our age.

Hinduism, when properly understood, represents a particular type of piety and spiritual ideal. The social economy is based upon distinctions of castes—literally colours—and orders. It is summed up by the Sanskrit expression Varnasrama-Dharma, the law of varna and the law of asrama. The varnas are the castes, the asramas are the four social orders of the student, the householder, the retired, and the mendicant; and the aim and object of all these is to cure the individual of his conceit of individuality, to train him in the truth that his highest life is not in opposition to, but in a

thorough and conscious identification with the Universal. To recognise the One in the many and to realise his own unity with the One, this is the end and aim of man's life in Hinduism, in both its speculative as well as in its practical side. Strange as it may sound to the ignorant and unimaginative foreigner, the essential divinity of man is the central conception of Hinduism. And, therefore, the moment a person realises his essential divinity, his one-ness with God, he is released from all restrictions, and becomes a law unto himself. To such a man there is neither Brahmin nor Sudra. Every man and woman is a revelation of the Supreme. Should a pariah attain this state of sainthood, he receives the honours to which few Brahmins are permitted to aspire.

But though this is the general characteristic of Hinduism, it is brought out more prominently in Vaishnavism than perhaps in any other sect or school. The intense humanitarianism of Pundit Bijoy Krishna, which in his younger days found fervent expression in and through the religious and social revolt of the Brâhmo-Samâj, found, if anything, even a deeper and fuller expression in and through his later and Vaishnavic developments. As a Brahmo, he had looked upon man as an equal and a brother; as a Vaishnava, he now realised in every man and woman the presence and personation of his God. The message of his old Brahmoism was the brotherhood of man, which formulated itself in a propaganda of social amelioration. The message of his later Vaishnavism was the divinity of man, which transformed the service of man into a living service of God, and worked out a noble transfiguration in all human relations and social activities. Profound as was his piety, even as a member and minister of the Brâhmo-Samâj, it deepened with his age, until he stood before the Hindus of Bengal as an object-lesson of the highest and most passionate love of God described in their scriptures and exemplified in the lives of their saints and avatars.

This saintly person Manoranjan accepted as his Guru. To him he consecrated his life. From him he drew all the deepest inspirations of his character. Having retired from the mission work of the Brâhmo-

Samâj, Manoranjan continued to preach the gospel of that ardent and passionate love of God and consecrated service of man, which he saw exemplified in the character and conversation of his master.

Family bereavements, added to the ascension of his Guru, compelled Manoranjan to retire from public life for a time; but the new nationalist upheaval in Bengal, following upon the ill-advised partition of that Province by Lord Curzon, brought him out of his temporary retirement and placed him among the foremost preachers of the new gospel of a free and self-regulated national life as an essential precondition for the realisation of the life in God of every individual member of the nation. The cry of Vandê-Mâtaram or Hail Motherland, with which this new movement started, is not a mere political formula to him. Mere politics appealed very little to this gifted Bengalee poet and preacher. Whatever politics he professes is a part of his religious ideal. And the cry of Vandê Mâtaram is to him an inspired mantra. His nation is to him an ordering of his God, ordained to reveal to him the love and life of his Maker. The Mother in Vandê Mâtaram is to him not a mere poetical impersonation, but a concrete revelation of his God. Under the inspiration of the Spirit of his Guru, Manoranjan now consecrated himself and all he could call his own to the service of this deity, the Mother or the Motherland.

Without, perhaps, a very clear and strong grasp of that organic conception of the social unit that has commenced to almost revolutionise the ideas of our time regarding the relation between the individual and the social whole to which he belongs, which forms the fundamental basis of what we have characterised in these columns as philosophic nationalism, Manoranjan has drawn from his studies of the religious scriptures and social institutes and ideals of his nation, as strong an inspiration of the new nationalist ideals and thoughts as has been drawn by others from modern thought and culture. Accepting the teachings of his Guru, he believes that God is one, and Humanity is also one. But, at the same time, as the Divine Unity is not an undifferentiated but only a self-differentiated



Unity, even so the unity of the human race is also a unity which exists in and realises itself through endless varieties, some personal and individualistic, and some racial or national and collectivistic. This conception of a fundamental difference existing as a Divine ordering among different tribes and communities of men, is a fundamental implication of all ethnic creeds and codes. It is a fundamental implication of the social creed and codes of the Hindus also. Consequently, the gospel of nationalism is not an altogether unfamiliar thing to the thoughtful Hindu acquainted with the literature and traditions of his people. In fact, in some sense the nationalism of the Hindu, trained and educated in Hindu ways alone, is much stronger and of greater intrinsic worth than the selfish and self-seeking, the imitative and unspiritual political antipathy which so often masquerades as fervent nationalism among us. In the case of Manoranjan, however, the spirit of nationalism, while it had its roots in the teachings and traditions of his own people, received a broader and universal outlook partly through his close and long associations with the best class of his English-educated countrymen, and partly, or, more correctly speaking, largely, through the universalistic teachings of his Guru.

It is sometimes ignorantly believed that the conception of Humanity is a new conception in India. And in support of this error it is pointed out that neither Sanskrit nor any of the Indian vernaculars derived from Sanskrit has any term to express the concept humanity. Even some of our own people have lent their support to this falsehood by coining new words to express this concept. But a careful study of Vaishnavic scriptures reveals the fact that the Hindus had a much deeper conception of Humanity than what has as yet been developed among the people of Europe or America. Practically, Europe recognises only one kind of humanity, which is really not humanity, but white-manity. Non-white races do not count as essential factors of humanity. Their amelioration may be undertaken as an act of pity, their preservation may be desirable to help the growth of the white races, but they are not an organic part and element of that hu-

manity which the white races represent. This is the practical idea concerning Humanity among the enlightened and dominant white peoples of the modern world. The truly Christian conception of Humanity is, we know, very different from this. That conception has grown around the doctrine of Christ, as propounded in the Fourth Gospel. In a right interpretation of that doctrine, Christ and Humanity are really one. He is the Light of the world. He is the light which lighteth every man coming into the world. And as in higher Christian thought and philosophy the ideal of Humanity has grown around the conception of the Logos, even so in high Hinduism the ideal of Humanity has grown around the conception of NARAYANA. Nārāyana is the Indweller, severally, in individual souls, and collectively, he is also the Soul, so to say, of the whole of the human race. And this dual conception of Nārāyana, as manifested in human units and constituting the basal unity and continuity of individual life and consciousness, and as eternally revealing and realising himself—to use a Hegelian terminology—in and through the progressive evolution of the collective life and consciousness of the human race, lends a much deeper meaning and significance to the Hindu's ideal of Humanity than is found anywhere outside the very highest level of Christian idealism. But the underlying monistic or pantheistic ideas of Hinduism have lent a strength to the Hindu ideal of humanity, both in its individual and collective aspects, which, owing to its essential dualistic emphasis, Christianity has not been able to impart to it in either of these aspects.

Nārāyana is not a mere philosophical generalisation or a metaphysical abstraction. He is a concrete person like the Logos of orthodox Christian theology, but a person who is eternally revealing himself through innumerable human personalities, as well as who stands as the soul and spirit of the collective life of humanity. To the devout Vaishnava, every man is a manifestation of Nārāyana. And Nārāyana being endowed with a divine sensorium, participates, in some sense, in the enjoyments and sufferings of each individual human being. This suffering is not original but vicarious.

but none the less it is a part of divine experience. Collectively, also, the privations and sufferings of the race are equally part of divine experience. In this deeper sense, the service of man—every attempt to remove his ignorance, to relieve his sufferings, and to set him upon the truest and highest basis of his life, all these are elements in the worship of God. Whatever contributes to human misery, whatever retards the development of humanity, whatever obstructs the advance of man into his proper and conscious life in God, is therefore an outrage against God Himself. Nârâyana is perpetually seeking to reveal and realise himself in and through the life of each individual man and woman, and through the collective life of humanity. The bondage of man is in one sense the bondage of Nârâyana himself. Poverty, ignorance, social repression, political servitude, are therefore as much a violation of Dharma or the Divine Law as anger or lust and other mortal sins.

This is the general philosophy of life and duty which Manoranjan has imbibed from the teaching and character of his saintly master, and it lies at the back of all his public activities, whether as a preacher of religion or an advocate of the political and economic independence of his people. Like Asvini Kumâr's and Krishna Kumar's, his politics also are a part of his religion. Like Asvini Kumâr's and Krishna Kumar's, his patriotism also is an expression of his general ideal of universal humanity. To him humanity is a genus; the different races and nations of the world, with their special temperaments and civilisations, are the different species of this genus homo. The progress and development of humanity is dependent upon the progress and development of every branch of mankind. Love of his own country means, therefore, to Manoranjan no necessary hatred of other lands and other peoples.

By nature and training, Manoranjan is incapable of wantonly causing hurt to either man or beast. The one lesson that has been almost incessantly impressed upon him by his Guru, is that whoever wants to attain Bhakti or real love of God must cultivate kindness and pity towards all sentient creatures, and attachment to

the name of the Lord. The motto of the discipline under which he has placed himself is:—

“ With a humility that is humbler than the lowly grass which suffers to be trodden by man and beast without a protest, with a forbearance greater than that of the trees which do not withdraw their shade even from the man who comes to cut their branches and rob them of their wealth of flowers and fruits, with a spirit which, never seeking honour for itself, is ever ready to give preference to others, should the name of the Lord be perpetually sung.”



## SRIJUT SYÂM SUNDAR CHAKRAVARTI

(Written June, 1909.)

Srijut Syâm Sundar Chakravarti before his deportation last December, was known outside Bengal, mainly through his connection with the "BANDE MATARAM" newspaper. He was present at the congress that failed at Surat, where his simplicity of life and habits, his steadfast devotion to the Nationalist cause, his uncompromising regard for the ideals and principles that stand for Nationalism in India, won him the admiration and love of the large body of Nationalists gathered from all parts of the country. Henceforth he came to be regarded as one of the leaders of the Movement on the Bengal side.

In his own province, however, Syâm Sundar has been long known as a very capable Bengali journalist and writer. His paper, the "PRATIBÂSI," occupied the foremost place among Bengalee weeklies, in regard to its thoughtfulness, sobriety, and superior literary character. But popular and sensational journalism has, to a very large extent, destroyed the chances of success of high-class literary journals in Bengal, as elsewhere; and the "PRATIBÂSI" succumbed, after a few years, to the severe financial strain under which it lived and laboured almost all through its life. When the "SANDHYÂ" was started by the late Brahma Bândhab Upâdhyâya, Syâm Sundar joined its staff, and his simple and racy style contributed very largely to the unique success which that paper attained at one part of its life. When the "BANDE MATARAM" was organised at a Joint Stock concern, about the end of 1906, Syâm Sundar left the "SANDHYÂ" and joined its staff, and he was, to a very large extent, the very life and soul of that paper, until it was suppressed by the Government last November. A few weeks later, Syâm Sundar was himself arrested and deported, under Regulation III. of 1818, without any public indictment or trial.

Syâm Sundar belongs to a generation that came

very largely under the influence of the Hindu Revival of the closing quarter of the last century. Unlike Asvini Kumâr, Krishna Kumâr, or Manoranjan,—Syâm Sundar had never broken away from the ancient thoughts and traditions of his people, and, consequently, while Asvini Kumâr and Manoranjan represent what may be called the return movement in Bengalee thought and life of our time, Syâm Sundar represents the type of staunch nationalism that comes through the natural and instinctive conservatism of every people. He has, of course, come under the rationalistic influences of his age, and has had, therefore, to work out some sort of a synthesis between old ideas and institutions on the one side, and the new thoughts, aspirations, and conditions on the other. But it did not come through any open antithesis or protest, but grew gradually, and almost unconsciously, through the normal evolution of his intellectual and social environments.

No revival can really revive the past, just as it was in the past. It has to adjust the past to the living conditions of the present. A successful revival must, therefore, offer a new view-point and a new synthesis. It is in such a synthesis that the Hindu Revival in India of the last quarter of a century has had its main strength. And it must be admitted that the underlying thought of this Revival has more or less openly and consciously taken note of the protest of reason raised by the Brâhmo-Samâj, and other religious reform movements of our day.

Neo-Hinduism, as it is called, is not really the Hinduism of our fathers; it is a new phase, a new development, a new interpretation, and a new adjustment of the old and traditional ideals, in the light of present needs and conditions. Every reaction means, as Emerson says, the halt of reâson and its movement backward to pick up some neglected truth that had been previously lost sight of and left on the way. The movements of protest, inaugurated under alien influences, had left many a precious truth behind. They had ever emphasised the unreason and injustice of ancient thoughts and institutions, and had, therefore, overlooked the soul of truth and the counter-

poise of good that lie mixed up everywhere with falsehoods and evils. Those movements were also more or less forced from the outside, through the influence of imported ideas and ideals, and these latter brought in their train their own necessary counterpoise of falsehoods and evils, which, being foreign to the thought and life of the people, met with no natural antidote that society almost unconsciously and automatically, always and everywhere, provides against the necessary evils of its own native life and thought. All these combined to contribute to the strength of the reaction which passed over the country during the closing decades of the last century. It obstructed the advance of the aggressive religious and social reform movements visibly; but all the same, contributed to the general progress of thought and life, almost in every direction. The present Nationalist Movement in India is very largely indebted to this Reaction or Revival for a good deal, both of its inner strength and its outer influence.

Syâm Sundar is essentially a child of this Reaction. He has always clung to the spirit and traditions of his race with a tender tenacity that, while recognising their frailties, yet shrank from ruthlessly rooting them up lest the sacred organism itself should be wounded and injured in the operation. But he has also been sensitive to liberal influences, and has been sincerely respectful towards the leaders of the Brâhmo-Samâj and other reform movements; but, being essentially a man of sentiment, he has never permitted his intellectual ideas and appreciations to weaken the hold of his affections upon his own country and people. His patriotism has always controlled his reason and prevented him from making any violent protest in the name of Reason against the thoughts, beliefs, traditions and institutions of his race.

Patriotism is really of two kinds, abstract and concrete. The social and religious reformer loves his country and his people as ardently and devotedly as any other person; but his patriotism is of the abstract kind. He loves only the good, the beautiful, and the true, in his own country. He has no toleration for the bad, the ugly, and the false. He is more or less

of an iconoclast. He is cast in the mould of the prophet—rigid, uncompromising, faithful to whatever is true and good, relentless in his war against whatever, in his eyes, is false and evil. His country is to him more of an ideality than a reality. Krishna Kumâr's patriotism is essentially of this type, among us. But there is another class of patriotism also. It may be best characterised as concrete. It is not the love of an abstraction called country or nation. It loves its people in the concrete, just as they are, a mixture of both reason and unreason, of both good and bad. It loves its nation with a pure love, which sees the whole, seizes the totality, and in that totality finds an explanation for both its reason and unreason, its good and evil, and, seeing both the light and shade together, it is able to realise the proper perspective of both. It is not blind to the faults and errors, the evils and the weaknesses of its own nation, but only sees their natural explanations which others fail to see, and thus recognising the spirit of truth and goodness and the source of strength that lie hidden underneath them, he seeks to remove and remedy them from within, by working up the latent truth and goodness and strength; and is, in the meantime, lovingly tolerant of them. This is the character of what may be called concrete patriotism. Syâm Sundar's patriotism is of this kind, and, consequently, it is characterised by an intense conservatism, which is the soul of natural, as distinguished from philosophic, nationalism everywhere.

But Syâm Sundar is by no means a rigid and hide-bound conservative. He is always prepared to move with the times, and, in practical life, he has, like almost every Nationalist, given up many of the obsolete institutions and usages of his country and his caste. Born of very high-class Brahmin parents—his father was a well-known Adhyâpaka or professor of Brahminical lore—he observes all the formalism of Brahminical life, to the extent that these are demanded by the public opinion of his caste. But as far as that public opinion has commenced to become tolerant of heterodox habits and thoughts, Syâm Sundar does not refuse to follow them. In fact, he does



not even shrink from initiating these reforms, provided they do not create any vital disruption in social life. He is, therefore, as much at home with the orthodox Brahmin-Pundit as with the heterodox England-returned civilian or barrister. It is neither in eating nor drinking (though he is a teetotaler) that his Brahminism ever seeks to assert itself. Neither is it in his pride of birth that it comes out. He mixes freely with men of all castes, and in private life treats the Pariah with almost the same respect as he would render to a Brahmin, provided, of course, the former occupies in education and character the same position as the latter. But all the inherent pride of race in the man comes out the moment mere wealth seeks to assert itself over culture or character. In one sense, therefore, Syâm Sundar's spirit is perhaps the most democratic among the leading Nationalist workers in Bengal. But it is the democracy of the Brahmin, the claims of the intellect and the real man to equality, despite all differences in worldly position due to wealth or rank. It is the proud protest of the old spirit of intellectual and spiritual aristocracy of Hinduism, against the British-created aristocracy of land and lucre. Along with this pride of intellect and culture, Syâm Sundar has also inherited from his Brahmin ancestors a tender humanity, which is almost feminine in its care for the weak and the bereaved. Extremely sensitive to the least suspicion of slight or neglect, Syâm Sundar is also among the most selfless of our public men. Very poor himself, he has never refused to part with his last penny to any one, friend or acquaintance, who stood in greater or even equal need of it. Poverty makes misanthropes in Europe; his own poverty has made something of a philanthropist of this chip of an old and aristocratic Brahmin block. How much of it is due to his inheritance in the supremely spiritual civilisation of his nation, and how much to his own personal temperament, it is difficult to say. But, whatever may be their origin and cause, all who have come into intimate contact with Syâm Sundar have found his impulses to be almost uniformly noble, and his ideas lofty.

## CHINTĀMANI; THE BLIND BEGGAR PATRIOT OF CALCUTTA.

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Chintāmani is a well-known figure in the Northern Division of Calcutta. He belongs to the labouring class in Bengal. A boy of eleven, he came to Calcutta and found employment in one of the jute mills. Two years later he entered the service of a Bengalee gentleman in the Metropolis. While employed there he had an attack of small-pox, which left him totally blind. This is how Chintāmani became a beggar.

The British beggar sells boot-laces, or matches, or flowers, to evade the British police. Begging is criminal in civilisation. By the sweat of his brow shall man earn his bread. This was divine justice. No work, no bread: this is British law and ethics—for the poor. There is another law for the rich, who work not but eat, who sow not but enjoy what others sow, and water not but gather what others labour to grow. So say the Socialists. The rich are the law-makers here, or were until very recently. The man of wealth has, therefore, made poverty a crime. He, who lives on the labours of others, has decreed that every man shall work for his bread. He has provided the workhouse for the hungry and the homeless. But no begging, please.

Begging is bad for both he who begs and he who is begged. It is bad for the beggar, for it kills his self-respect. It is bad for the "begged"; it disturbs the self-complacence of Christian charity and Christian brotherhood. Christ had said that to feed the hungry was to feed Him. In the person of the beggar, He himself goes about among people, appealing to their charity. He is an inconvenient person in civilisation; a pleasant company on Sunday in church, but very troublesome at the festive board, so shut Him up in the prison or the workhouse.

This is the law as regards the poor beggar in

Western, Christian civilisation. It is different in Hindu or Moslem barbarism. The heathen has not that delicacy of feeling. He has no sense of the degradation of begging, nor does he feel the inconvenience of being "begged." The beggar begs openly and without shame. If Adam Smith has made begging a crime in England, Bhagavan Manu and Hazrat Mahomed have made it almost a religion in India. He who sends a beggar away from his door insults Allah and the Prophets, and kicks the Goddess Laksmi out of doors. To the caste-ridden, heathen Hindu, man is not a brother. He does not sing in fancy with the poet:—

Men my brothers, men the workers,  
Ever reaping something new—

and add in practice to it the unspoken finish—

They labour and sweat, they shiver and starve  
To leave the fruits to the favoured few.

Liberty, equality, and fraternity are unknown terms to him. But he believes in the divinity of man. Every man is to him an expression, a symbol, a revelation of the Deity. Every "nara" (man) is to him a "Nārāyana" (God). Both eating and feeding are to him religious sacraments. He does not say "Grace before meat"—does not thank the Lord for the sweet things spread out before him; but he offers it all to God. *Brahmārpanamastu*—may it be given to Brahman—this is his "grace." At every meal he has to perform the five great sacrifices. Whoever eats his food without offering these five sacrifices is a thief; he takes that which does not belong to him. These sacrifices are (1) to the gods, the tutelary deities of nature; (2) to the manes; (3) to the Rishis or the Sages; (4) to humanity; and (5) to all creatures. By the first, sacrifice to the gods, he recognises the contributions of Mother Nature to his own making and the production of the food before him. By the second, he is made to recognise his debt to his long line of ancestors, to whom he owes both his physical and his social life. By the third he is made to realise his

obligations to the wise and learned, who created and developed all the highest thoughts and culture of his race. The fourth is meant to awaken in him his place in universal humanity and his kinship with all men of every clime, colour, and creed. And the fifth is meant to help him to realise his relations beyond humanity, with all creatures. In this scheme of daily sacrifices the guest, whether invited or uninvited, symbolises humanity. And whether a guest is present or not, a portion of the food must be symbolically and sacramentally offered to the absent and the unknown men who are going about hungry in the world. In this primitive scheme of life, the beggar is an uninvited guest. He has a distinct and sacred place. Anglo-Saxon contact and culture have almost destroyed the sanctity of the relation, but has not yet been able to shut up the poor beggar in workhouses or prisons.

Though only a blind beggar, Chintâmani is not, therefore, a criminal in Calcutta, at least not in the Northern or "Native" town. In the white city beggars are not tolerated, and if any hungry man, through ignorance or mischance, finds himself in the vicinity of white and Christian Calcutta, he is not even allowed the opportunity of "moving on," like Little Dorrit, by the Calcutta police, but is at once locked up for the night in the police-yard, and sent, by order of the Magistrate, to the prison the next day. But Chintâmani is a staunch Svadeshi; he would not accept the Feringee's alms. Chintâmani is illiterate, but not unintelligent or really uneducated. There is such a thing as social education, and this education is of a distinctly higher type in heathen Hindustan than in all Christendom. Through Kathâs, or recitations of ancient stories and legends; through Kirtan and Yâtrâs, or religious songs and passion-plays; through shows and pageants; through ceremonials and sacraments; through fairs and pilgrimages;—the Hindu masses all over India receive a general culture and education which are in no way lower, but positively higher, than the general level of culture and education received through schools and newspapers, or even the ministrations of

the churches, in Western Christian lands. It is an education, not in the so-called three R's, but in humanity. Chintāmani, though illiterate, has received this common culture of his race. The law of compensation has well worked in his poor life, and his loss of outer vision has been more than compensated by the greater clarity of his mental and moral perceptions. Chintāmani cannot see the men and the things about him, but knows and understands a good deal more about them than those who go about usually with their eyes wide open. He knows almost everybody who is anybody in Northern Calcutta.

He was a constant attendant at Svadeshi meetings, when Svadeshi meetings could be freely held in Calcutta. He knows every Svadeshi speaker by his voice, knows his character and culture and position, as thoroughly as any contemporary journalist. He cannot read, but every morning buys a Bengalee daily, and has it read to him. Thus posted on all the current events and utterances of the day, Chintāmani goes about from door to door, begging for his living, singing national songs, and preaching the gospel of Svadeshi and nationalism to men and women alike.

Chintāmani came to some slight grief once in a motor-accident. The European owner of the motor-car was surprised to find a staunch Svadeshi or nationalist in this blind beggar. He asked Chintāmani to give up Bande-Mataram, and offered five rupees as his reward. Chintāmani contemptuously refused the offer. The European threatened to cut his "tuft" off. But Chintāmani burst into song, which meant, "Let my life be taken, but I will never give up Bande-Mataram." Struck by the firmness and devotion of Chintāmani, he offered him two rupees, but Chintāmani said, "I do not accept alms from the foreigner."

Chintāmani does not spend all that he gets in begging from door-to-door on himself. Very little is needed by an Indian to live in India. Chintāmani spends even less than this very little on himself. Whatever he is able to save, he spends for the Cause.

When the National Fund was started in Calcutta, on the 16th of October, 1905, this blind beggar,

Chintâmani, took all his savings and put it in the hands of the trustees. It is said that when a fund was started in aid of the defence of Sreejut Aravinda Ghosh, Chintâmani paid in his mite to it. One day, when he went with his contribution to Miss Sarojini Ghosh, who had appealed for funds for her brother's defence, she treated him to some light refreshments and offered to pay his tram-fare. Chintâmani smiled, and said: "I had already provided for it. Keep this money, and get out Aravinda Babu. I shall show this receipt, and get more money by and bye."

If any cloth be offered to Chintâmani, he always wants to know if it is Svadeshi,—home-made, or British. If it is home-made, he accepts it; if foreign, he steadily refuses to touch it.

This blind, illiterate beggar, Chintâmani, is an object lesson in the endless possibilities of Indian patriotism. The "BASUMATI" of Calcutta has rendered a great service to the Nationalist cause by publishing a character-sketch of this true and devoted son of the Mother. But will not the police go after him, and haul him up under Section 124 A, or, better still, under Section 108 of the C. P. C.? But Chintâmani would not mind. If he is prosecuted, he will be the first true martyr among us.

We are indebted to the "BASUMATI" for some of the facts of this sketch.

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